MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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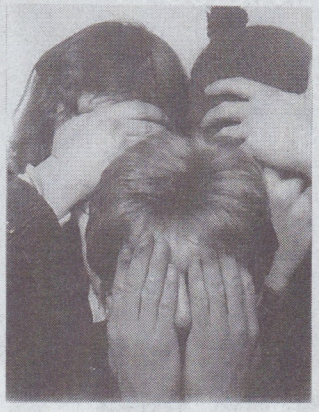

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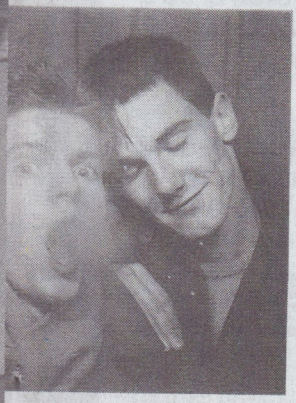
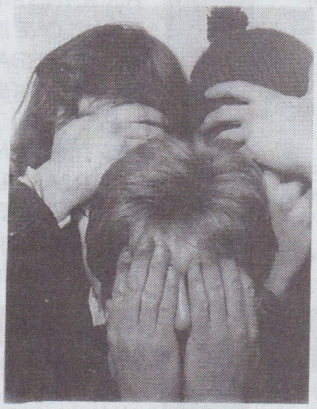

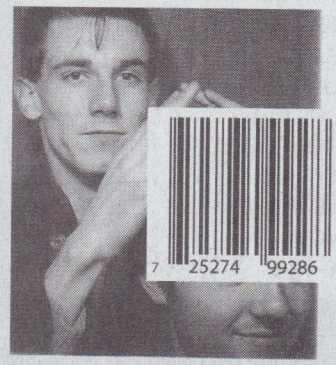

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Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

REPTILE RANCH – LP
HEZ – Esclavos 12"
PLASTIC TONES – 45
UPSIDE – Nati Per Soffrire EP
RANK / XEROX – M.Y.T.H. 12"
MARK WYNN – EP
FNU CLONE INC. – Binary Or Die LP
WARM BODIES – EP + CS
THE DOGS – Slash Your Face EP
IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO – EP

MATT BADENHOP

DANGUS TARKUS – LP
THE DOGS – Slash Your Face EP
EL BANDA – Wściekłyszpaler EP
HEZ – Esclavos 12"
IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO – EP
MOB 47 – Carnival in Rio flexi
MOVING TARGETS – LP
ÖTZI – "Gong Show / Sunbeam"
POLICE CONTROL – Sentimental EP
UPSIDE – Nati Per Soffrire EP

ARIELLE BURGDORF

LYSOL – "Wired / Knucklehead"
ÖTZI – "Gong Show / Sunbeam"
DEZERTER – Historia 2xLP
ARTEFACT – Votive Offering LP
THE DOGS – Slash Your Face EP
RIK & THE PIGS – 45
EL BANDA – Wściekłyszpaler EP
MOB 47 – Carnival in Rio flexi
BLACK ABBA – "Lost Dog" 45
IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO – EP

MITCH CARDWELL

FEEDTIME – Gas LP
RIK & THE PIGS – 45
FNU CLONE INC. – Binary Or Die LP
BLACK ABBA – "Lost Dog" 45
TIMMY'S ORGANISM – 45
RAYS – LP
REPTILE RANCH – LP
THE INVISIBLE TEARDROPS / THE WINSTONS – split EP
JAMES ARTHUR'S MANHUNT – 45
LYSOL – "Wired / Knucklehead"

ROBERT COLLINS

KALEIDOSCOPE / DRUJ – live
S-21 / PRYSS – live
PRISON OCULTO – live
PROGRAM / RIÑA– live
CRIATURAS / Q – live
CRUTCH – live
MUJERES PODRIDAS - live
OLVIDO – live
BEYOND PEACE – live
AUSENCIA – live
RAKTA – live

LAYLA GIBBON

RANK/XEROX – M.Y.T.H. 12"
POLICE CONTROL – Sentimental EP
RAYS – LP
REPTILE RANCH – LP
BLACK ABBA – "Lost Dog" 45
WARM BODIES – EP
MOVING TARGETS – LP
PLASTIC TONES – "The Eyes" 45
RIK AND THE PIGS – 45
MARK WYNN – EP

DAN GOETZ

Euro-tripping....

GREG HARVESTER

DREAMDECAY – YÚ LP
FUNERAL CONE – LP
WARM BODIES – EP + CS
MEAT DREAMS – CS
THEE GUILLOTINES – CS
IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO – EP
ACRYLICS – "Despair" 45
RANK / XEROX – M.Y.T.H. 12"
RIK AND THE PIGS – 45
NAIL CLUB – CS

KENNY KAOS

Outta sight..

CAROLYN KEDDY

FEEDTIME – Gas LP
JAMES ARTHUR'S MANHUNT – 45
BLACK ABBA – "Lost Dog" 45
WARM BODIES – EP
WITCH JAIL – "Slimewave, USA!" 45
MOD VIGIL – LP
KOMPLIKATIONS – Humans 12"
MAKE-OVERS – Try Me LP
BBQ – Mark Sultan LP
FNU CLONE INC. – Binary Or Die LP
RAYS – LP / RANK/XEROX – 12"

RAY LUJAN

CIG ALERT – CD
CYANIDE PILLS – Sliced & Diced CD
DOWN LOVE – Trust CD
FASHIONISM – "Back in the Day" 45
GOOD FRIEND – Ride The Storm CD
MORAL PANIC – LP
PLASTIC TONES – 45s
POSERS – EP / PRETTY HURTS – LP
REDD KROSS / SIDE EYES – EP
CHANNEL THREE – live
SHATTERED FAITH – live

MARISSA MAGIC

HOUSEWIVES – LP
WARM BODIES – EP
FNU CLONE INC. – Binary Or Die LP
THIS SAXOPHONE KILLS FASCISTS / CUBE – live
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RANK/XEROX – M.Y.T.H. 12"
RIK AND THE PIGS – 45
RAYS – LP
FUNERAL CONE – LP

ROTTEN RON READY

POWER – Electric Glitter Boogie LP
HEZ – Esclavos 12"
DANGUS TARKUS – LP
MOB 47 – Carnival in Rio flexi
FIRING SQUAD – At Their Mercy EP
BLACK ABBA – "Lost Dog" 45
ACRYLICS – "Despair" 45
LYSOL – "Wired / Knucklehead"
NOSEBLEED – Lowlife EP
UPSIDE – Nati Per Soffrire EP

FRED SCHRUNK

ÖTZI – "Gong Show / Sunbeam"
EL BANDA – Wściekłyszpaler EP
LYSOL – "Wired / Knucklehead"
WARM BODIES – EP
ACRYLICS – "Despair" 45
BLANK SQUARE – Animal I LP
FUNERAL CONE – LP
RANK/XEROX – M.Y.T.H. 12"
RAYS – LP
ATAXXIA – Bleedout EP

LENA TAHMASSIAN

POW! – Crack An Egg LP
MARK WYNN – EP
REIZ – LP
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RAYS – LP
RUBY – Deadlock EP
BLOWINS – LP
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POLICE CONTROL – Sentimental EP

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SHITWORKERS: Juliana Almeida, Lydia Athanasopoulou, Judy Bals, Michelle Barnhardt, Mariam Bastani, Heidi Marshall Booth, Justin Briggs, Jon Carnes, Rob Coons, Mark Dias, Mark Dober, John Downing, Amelia Eakins, Emily, Jonathan Floyd, Eli Groshelle, Dan Gudgel, Oscar Gutierrez, Michelle Hill, Frank LeClair, Yumi Lee, Legs, Mike Leslie, Hal MacLean, Ricky Martyr, Erich Olsen, Mimi Pfahler, Matt Reynolds, Andres Ruiz, Dale Smith, Martin Sorrondeguy, Thera Webb, Wormhole

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ISSUE #408

Mülltüte at the Knockout in San Francisco, photo: Martin Sorrendeguy

We are looking for a new content coordinator. Do you enjoy proofreading and Italian hardcore? Accounting and UKDIY? Drinking bottomless coffee and blasting KBD singles?

Get in touch: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

FRONT COVER: UV-TV and Reptile Ranch photos courtesy of the band. Zone Infinie photo by Yannick Gallepie. Street Eaters photo by Shawnacee Schneider. Mülltüte photo by Martin Sorrendeguy.

CONTRIBUTORS: Matt Badenhop, Julia Booz, Josh Carman, Stefan Christensen, Dom, Yannick Gallepie, Caitlin Harris, Meghan Monahan, Sarah Ruggiero, Ariadna Sanchez, Shawnacee Schneider, Alex Simon, Martin Sorrondeguy, Miriam Klein Stahl, Ryan Stanis, Emily Styles

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LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

Dear *Maximum Rocknroll*,

I am currently in the process of leaving my beloved punk scene in Sheffield, England to go and live with my girlfriend who is working out in Baku, Azerbaijan.

I have been to visit her once and spent a bit of time trying to uncover if there is a local punk scene; sadly to no avail. I was wondering if anybody at *MRR* (I understand you guys have a huge archive!) had any information on bands (past or present) or anything that might help me find my people. Ideally looking at Azerbaijan but any content on places like Iran, Turkmenistan or Kazakhstan would be so greatly received. Thanks ever so much and keep up the good work!

Your buddy,

Andy
andy_watmore@hotmail.com

Hey punks! Drop Andy a line if you can help him out!

Hey *MRR*,

I'm Emanuele from NOFU, an Italian band. We play '80s hardcore with first crossover influences in the Italian way of Negazione / Indigesti / Raw Power / Kina! We will be releasing our second LP in May and we would love to tour the US (especially the south region), at the beginning of September.

Could you help us a bit? Give us some contacts and some advice? Do you know any bands who might tour with us?

Let me know everything! Thank you very much!

— Emanuele
skapelilli@hotmail.it

Hey Emanuele,
Thanks for getting in touch. Unfortunately we're not in a position to help set up tours but maybe there are some punks reading this who would want to play or tour with you. Good luck!

The Universe is Lit: Bay Area Black and Brown Punk Fest is inspired by the Black and Brown Punk Show Collective's series of fests beginning in Chicago during the Summer of 2014 as a way for POC / Queer / Trans punx in Chicago to connect and keep the punk scene diverse and safe. The Universe is Lit Fest aims to continue in the traditions of the Black and Brown Punk Show Collective in Chicago, Not Enough Fest in Portland, and the Think and Die Thinking Festival in San Jose, CA.

The organizers of Bay Area's Universe is Lit Fest seek to honor and exalt the existence of Black and Brown musicians, artists, and freeks throughout history, from the pre-patriarchal era and beyond. We recognize ourselves as future ancestors and in the words of Grace Jones aim to "let them know we're here!" across the expanses of time and experience.

OUR GOALS

- are to share uninterrupted displays of raw emotions produced by Black and Brown people.
- to revel in a fully immersive sonic and visual experience fronted by Black and Brown artists
- to highlight non-linear, obscure, cacaphonic and melodic works of art from Black and Brown musicians
- to reclaim the legacy of a genre created by and embedded in the DNA of Black and Brown people
- to praise the unconventional creations springing forth from Black and Brown experiences
- to continue the legacy of Black and Brown freaks who existed before us and will continue to exist long after us

WE BELIEVE

- that sound is healing and transformative
- in our power as cosmic beings who are, literally, derived from stardust
- in expressions of joy, creativity and collaboration as acts of resistance and transcendence

Interested in playing? The fest takes place August 3rd - 6th, 2017. All performers must actively be down with the fest's mission statement. Bands must be 50% Black or POC and fronted by a person of color in order to perform at the Universe is Lit. The new band show on Saturday August 5th is only open to bands that have not played any shows. Bay Area bands are guaranteed $100, bands in California but outside of the Bay Area are guaranteed $200 and bands outside of CA are guaranteed $300. DJs are guaranteed $100. See theuniverseislit.com for details on how to submit.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR ARCHIVE SHITWORKERS

Do you have access to a computer and an internet connection? Then you're qualified to help us complete the ultimate punk resource, our online, searchable database of every review ever published in *MRR*. Write to archive@maximumrocknroll.com to get involved and help us make it happen!

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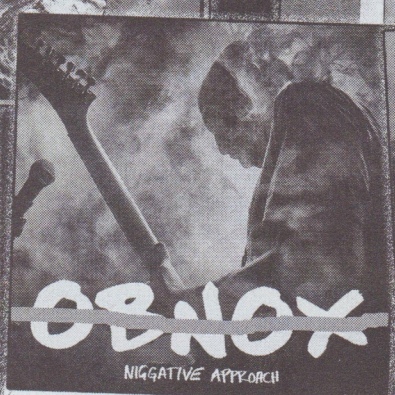

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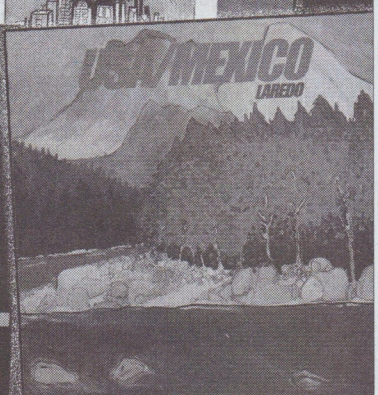

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COLUMNS

Intro (Drug) Bust

I run a Syringe Service Program (SSP), and part of my job is to give trainings on harm reduction and overdose prevention. Two years ago I was asked to give a guest lecture on harm reduction to an undergraduate Criminology class. Usually the audience for this type of thing is a bit more sympathetic—social workers, doctors, public health students. I had reservations about standing in front of a classroom of aspiring cops and explaining to them that my job is essentially to facilitate people breaking the law. I considered backing out, but figured if I can't single-handedly take down the police state I should at least try to instill some humanity into one class of matriculating cops.

I got to the classroom on the day of the lecture. I explained how the incidence rate of HIV decreased by 92% in People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) in the ten years after our state piloted needle exchange programs, how thousands of people have reported saving a life using Narcan that they received from our program, the staggering number of new Hepatitis C infections we have found while screening drug users, the amount of people we have helped to get into detox programs, the hundreds of thousands of syringes we give out every year, the valuable relationships we form with clients who report feeling stigmatized in nearly every other public and private space. The students seem fascinated—or at least amused—by this scandalous snapshot of how The Other Half live. But then this blonde, born-to-be-a-literal-narc looking asshole raised his hand and asked, *"Why do you care?"*

After a moment of deliberately uncomfortable silence I said, "So to clarify, you're asking why would I care if someone I know who uses drugs were to die?"

"Yeah….like what does it matter to you if these people overdose?"

The kid noticed the professor's clear physical discomfort and tried to recover like his question was an honest inquiry more than a rhetorical challenge. My eyes rolled so far back into my head I could see ten hours into the past when this cop-to-be was doing a keg stand at a frat party with a photoshopped pic of Ann Coulter in a confederate flag bikini (Google it. It exists) hanging on the wall.

There was palpable uneasiness in the room. I finally responded, "Well if you don't find the argument that people who use substances, which includes the majority of the people in America and in this room, are human beings who deserve to live to be a salient enough argument then maybe the fact that every overdose event costs the state [some exorbitant figure I had researched and squirreled away for this very defense] will have some significance to you." The kid's cheeks became flushed. Clearly ashamed, he said "Oh, okay…I didn't know that…" More silence. The class moved on. I'm all about meeting people where they're at.

I had half expected someone in the class would say something like this. It's common for fascists to be out of the closet in this political climate, but at the time it was taboo for them to be this open about their contempt for humanity—at least where I live. Does it seem like I am being harsh on this kid? It should. To ask why you should care if a drug user lives or dies is to imply that using drugs renders a person useless to society, that every time people use drugs they are taking their lives into their own hands and deserve whatever fate befalls them. It also incorrectly assumes that the questioner is morally superior and that they are an appropriate executor of another person's worth. To try to assign value to someone's life based solely on a function of their benefit to you, monetary or otherwise, is profoundly fucked up. How is this asshole so presumptuous to assume his judgement will be of any consequence to anyone? But the sad truth is that it does and it will continue to.

MRR Readers: I'm telling you this story, in this, my inaugural column, to establish a baseline. Overamped is going to be all about harm reduction; its history, implications, policies, innovations and contentions. But for this to be a successful endeavor, we must first agree on a foundation of striving to survive while causing the least suffering possible. To me, this has always been a prereq for being a punk. But for the first time in my history on this planet I can't tell by looking at someone if they are a SHARP, a *Breitbart* subscriber, or just an H+M customer, so what do I know.

If you are straightedge and / or otherwise opposed to substance use, I challenge you to consider that regardless of what you personally practice, people still use drugs. People have always used drugs. People *will* always use drugs. If every single illicit or licit substance were made illegal today, people would still seek them, find them, and use them with worse outcomes than had they been legal. If all drugs were to disappear from the surface of the earth tomorrow people would create new ones, quickly.

Even animals have been found to use substances to alter their state of mind or quell anxiety. Bees purposefully return to consume the pollen of flowers that they know will make them go numb. For a good time, elephants are known to get intentionally drunk on fermented fruit. Cows do the same with certain fungi. According to Johann Hari, author of *Chasing the Scream*, water buffalo, who used to ignore the fields of opium growing around them, suddenly started eating it compulsively once bombs started dropping during The Vietnam War.

Many people have a personal aversion to substances, oftentimes for good reason. People and animals use drugs for pleasure, to cope, to escape, or to self-soothe. For some people, particularly those who have been exposed to trauma or who are living on the streets, using dope, meth, crack, booze etc. maybe the thing that is helping them to stay alive. Some people develop an unhealthy dependence on substances. Most do not. For better or for worse, people use drugs because they work. This is an invariable truth. It is neither inherently good nor evil, and it impacts your life regardless of whether or not you choose to partake. The relevant question moving forward is not "Should people use drugs?" It is, "How do we diminish the risks associated with drug use?"

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COLUMNS

I first discovered harm reduction in a zine as a teenager. It's been about fifteen years since then. I started working with drug users in my early 20s and for the past two years I have been running a harm reduction program that has been around since 1994. I have met some of the funniest, most intelligent, and strongest people I've ever known while doing this work. I have also witnessed some of the most complicated, dark, and ruthless situations. I have used Narcan to save the lives of about twenty people. I have had one person die in my arms. I have lost literally countless people I care about to the "opioid epidemic" in the past two years. This week I went to the funeral of a 45-year-old mother of three who was otherwise perfectly healthy. She died of an overdose while staying at a local wet shelter. Another person staying at the shelter had asked the supervisor to call 911 for her and he responded, "She's okay. She's always like this." No one checked on her throughout the night. She had been dead for hours by the time staff noticed anything was amiss. Due to the same kind of mindset as the kid in that Criminology class, no one will be held accountable for this negligence. She was self-medicating, so she deserves everything she got.

Harm Reduction is an umbrella term used to refer to a set of pragmatic public health interventions that focus on reducing risk in any activity. This could be as broad as using a seatbelt while driving or putting filters on cigarettes. But the term harm reduction is more frequently invoked when in reference to actions which carry a lot of inherent risk, specifically drug use and sometimes sex. There are a few basic tenets that are central to the harm reduction approach:

– Harm Reduction accepts that for better or worse, people will use licit and illicit drugs. There is a whole spectrum of substance use which can span from abstinence to chaotic use.

– We meet people where they're at and praise any steps taken to reduce risk, no matter how small they may seem.

– We know that an abstinence-only approach doesn't work for many people, and understand that abstinence may not be the target for everybody. The end goal is to improve quality of life for a person, however they may define that.

– Services are non-judgmental and non-coercive. They should seek to empower drug users rather than patronize. We work alongside people and make sure that drug users have a voice in the policies and programs that impact them.

– People are experts in their own lives and in their substance use and should be respected as such. They should be encouraged to share tips and knowledge with their peers.

– Drug use does not exist in a vacuum. We recognize the way in which racism, sexism, trauma, poverty, stigma and other "isms" impact each person's narrative and capacity for reducing harm at any given time.

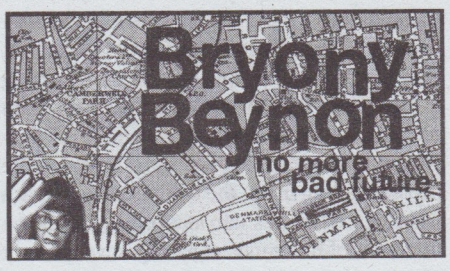
The harm reduction movement began in the '60s as an activist response to the criminalization of drugs and hepatitis, but was really catalyzed around injection drug use in the mid-1980s in response to the HIV / AIDS epidemic. To the best of my knowledge, the first needle exchange program began in Amsterdam by the Junkies Union in 1984, and was institutionalized in England under Thatcher's conservative administration in 1986. Reagan didn't even acknowledge the existence of the virus until 1985. Most industrialized nations started hopping on board with harm reduction shortly after the UK, with the exception of the US and Sweden.

I'm sure many of you were affected by the genocide that the US government imposed with its petulant negligence during the early days of the AIDS crisis. By 1989, injection drug use was the fastest growing route of HIV transmission in the US. Tens of thousands of injection drug users died from AIDS between 1981 and 1990. Unwilling to sit by and idly witness the carnage, activists began operating underground needle exchanges around 1986. By 1995 there were 68 needle exchange programs believed to have been operating in the US, 55% of which were legal. In 1998 the federal government issued a ban on using federal money to fund needle exchanges.

Flash forward to 2017, and although heroin has been decriminalized in several countries, it is *still* illegal to have or to obtain a syringe without a prescription in some US states. This obstacle persists despite decades of research that prove that access to free needles reduces HIV and Hepatitis and does not cause an increase in crime or drug use. In fact, several studies have shown that IV drug users who utilize syringe service programs are significantly more likely to decrease and / or stop using drugs altogether than those who do not access an SSP. The federal government still refuses to fund the purchase of syringes by these programs despite their categorical cost-saving success in study after study. To add insult to injury, our newly elected vice president Mike Pence helped to usher in one of the worst HIV outbreaks since the 1980s by forbidding needle exchange programs to operate in Indiana. Under his administration, almost 200 residents of Scott County contracted HIV in just one year's time. In the ten years prior to the outbreak, there were about five new cases of HIV in the same county. Finally the CDC came in and told Pence he was a fuckup and that they were taking over. Then he was elected vice president. This is what we have to look forward to. Explosive failure of the Trump / Pence neo-klan public policy followed by martial law.

Anyway, back to the '90s. It took another several years and many more activist arrests for the overdose reversal drug Narcan to be made available to lay people in any state. Despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of lives that have been saved by non-medical professionals administering Narcan, it is still illegal for lay people to have or administer Narcan in several states. And although the federal government lifted a long held ban on the funding of needle exchange programs in 2016, there is still a stipulation which states that federal money cannot be spent on buying needles.

Our system is not one that is set up to quickly absorb and adapt to scientific evidence. Politicians prefer to sit on their hands and argue about the theoretical implications of what they see as a tacit endorsement of drug use while there are volumes of documented benefits staring back at them. Thousands of lives are lost while we try to figure it out. Right now, the US is undergoing a similar political struggle to SSPs while trying to bring Safe Injection Facilities (SIFs) into this country. It doesn't have to be like this. While I am still holding out hope for full-scale revolution, there are plenty of practical measures that can and have been effective in the meantime. Some of them, including SIFs, heroin assisted treatment, and full decriminalization will be explored in the future of this column. I also plan on showcasing the voices and experiences of drug users, people living with HIV and HCV, experts and innovators as well as exploring trends in drug culture. I would love to hear what you have to say. Opinions, suggestions, questions, concerns can be sent to me at DearAuntieHazel@gmail.com. All hate mail will be redirected to the White House.



I am alone on international women's day, thinking about my international women, eating cake for breakfast, alternately staring into the void and doggedly ploughing through a to-do list that definitely counts as strikebreaking. Is it still a strike if you don't tell anyone you didn't do anything you were

supposed to? Is it still a strike if no one knows who you are? The impossibility of stopping makes the act of trying even more important. Here is a uncharacteristically brief missive for you, dear Maxy-roqqa, may your struggles be surmountable, your fees discounted, your pizza chewy, your sleep deep.

Hyperproductivity is a symptom of late capitalism but also makes for great bands. A repeated recommendation since my inauguration to Sydney Australia life has been the label Paradise Daily. Purveyor of beautifully-designed tapes and a recent foray into record-sized releases and CDs too, this woman-run label has been around a few years and is resolutely doing the damn thing, at a rate of considerable knots too. PDR releases range from discography / greatest hits style tapes to couple-tracks demos, from known entities like the UV Race and Low Life, Holy Balm and Red Red Krovvy right the way through to some (for me) unknown pleasures (Ela Stiles, M.O.B, Volunteers in Policing Programme). The liberal use of format we all knew had never gone anywhere definitely feels a vital part of this maximalist, inclusive approach to putting shit out into the world, owing to it being quick (especially in a part of the globe where pressing plants fear to tread) and comparably cheap. The Paradise Daily back catalogue is so intense as to be overwhelming and while some of the beat-free synth-heavy reverb-laden meandering stuff is so numerous as to be hard to differentiate at points, none of it is objectionable and all of it is hugely worth digging through. To my knowledge this is all Australian music but I could be wrong, and other than that there appears to be no binding sonic principles beyond the objectively cool, a taste-based boundary refreshing in the word of hyper niche sub-sub-sublabels. Paradise Daily is worth checking out. Non-Aus distribution seems non-existent but hey, sorry, that's why you have the internet.

Relatedly, I've been listening to the new record by Sydney band ORION this week, which came out on CD on PDR and on LP on another solid Australian label—Cool Death—relatively recently. A set of eight clearly thought-over but not over-thought songs bring on the weird terseness of the second Chameleons LP, but without any overly sobering delusions of melodrama, somehow up-tempo enough to inspire winsome pogo in all who witness. There is a first-wave goth gloomth to this, their first LP, that's just totally wicked. Whole songs go by in a weird poetic of half-heard lines that you can't stop humming without a clue what's being said, understated poetics, plaintive but determined. Yuta is not afraid to open his mouth. Skipping in circles face hidden under a mop of hair. Fits. Vocally there is a tiniest fleck of Morrissey's tone here which I've tried to blank out because it goes Curtis or the whispery come-ons of Jaz Coleman from Killing Joke. It's that vibe but without deliberate reach that makes attempts at rehash so cringey. Orion's LP does its own thing, pop production preferred over anything too low-fi. The clarity is refreshing. Achey-breaky-bass. *"How are you any different?"*

Now, I don't know these people so my appreciation is unmarred by social codes. As a stranger in a strange city, my new city, Sydney, I wasn't sure what to make of this band when they topped off a long-ass day (Australia still loves all-dayers) of music. It was at least 30 degrees (pushing 90F) and the guitarist took to the stage in a heavy camouflage army jacket. Fits. I was taken aback to see the crowd response they got—they absolutely could have been a NYHC band. Someone broke a collar bone. The crowd lost it, like a pack of smiling Pavlov's dogs who feel hardcore feelings deep down in the flange. Fits. Once we've learnt that it is okay to run around like wild animals because you feel so good from the music, only social codes remain to stop us.

Praise hymns to fucking up, lost opportunities, sensing the next one around the corner. Insistently demonic drum machine propulsions are the exact salve we need. The two best songs on here are "Sexy Alien" and "Turbulence." "Sexy Alien" features an almost laughably good bassline that could be a disco track, looping through the song in an improbably fun way. "Turbulence" feels like coming up. Thankfully, this LP includes not a moment of shoegazing abstraction or overly layered fuzz. I have to turn this up to hear it over the trucks which pass my window. Stranger in a strange city. Maybe we don't know anyone anyway except when there is music and it is then we are all the same.

paradisedaily.bandcamp.com
orionsydneyglam.bandcamp.com

THE GREAT BAND NAME SHOWDOWN

As some of you might know, I'm in a band called SHATTERED SILENCE. We were around from about 1986 to 1989, re-formed briefly in 1991 and got back together to play a few shows in 2015 and it's been an on again / off again thing ever since (as of now, it's an on thing). In the process of setting up a social media page for the band, I discovered that there were other bands with the same name. It's not all that original, I suppose—I stole the name from the title of a 1984 album by the Winnipeg band UNWANTED. Anyway, one of 'em is a self-described southern rock band from Tennessee and their influences are listed as LYNYRD SKYNYRD, GUNS 'N ROSES and BON JOVI (sounds REALLY promising). Their Facebook page has a profile picture with an eagle with an American flag behind it and the cover photo is a Confederate flag. I think this band might be a bit confused. They do have pretty cool t-shirts, though (no American *or* Confederate flags on it).

The other one is what could best be described as a Christian alternative rock band from Texas. Their vocalist / guitarist Justin Gambino said their name comes from *"400 years of silence between the Old Testament and New Testament in the Bible…We believe that in this life, in this world, some people feel that God has gone silent in their lives and we want to be the light to the world and to shatter that silence."* I have to admit that's a lot more thought out than just poaching the name from an album title. Still, even with the obvious differences, I've felt a bit of a kinship with them and have even interacted with their Facebook page. They seem like decent-enough guys, even if their music is pretty awful and I'm being generous there. I was still saddened to learn that they're splitting up because Justin has *"felt led by the Lord to pursue a solo career."* I didn't know the Lord was in the music management business. I posted that I was disappointed they were splitting up because now we wouldn't be able to do a split record with them. One of the guys in the band took it with good humor.

So it's up to us to carry the SHATTERED SILENCE banner. I hope we're capable of such a daunting task. And it got me to thinking about bands with the same name. The endless discussions over who's better—SUBHUMANS from the UK or the SUBHUMANS from Canada? The Los Angeles X or the Australian one? It always makes for enjoyable, often spirited debates—they sometimes become more intense than discussing political issues. I put together a list of bands with the same names. In some cases, the spelling might be different but it's the same pronunciation. And I pretty much stuck to bands that fall under the punk, post-punk or hardcore banner. Even if I don't declare winners or losers, its also a good way to expose you, my loyal readers, to bands you might not have heard of before—so it's as much a public service as a competition. Finally, I realize this is far from a complete list.

COLUMNS

COLUMNS

I already mentioned the dueling SUBHUMANS. There seems to be more polarization with these bands than the others—if people like one, they tend not to like the other. I think they're both great. While each had socially and politically-conscious lyrics, they had differing musical approaches. The UK band (no "the," just SUBHUMANS) operates in an anarcho-punk vein—maybe that's a rather vague term. It's a mix of punk, reggae, post-punk, and rock, along with sharp, observational lyrics. They still play out (having returned from a hiatus in 1999) and still play almost all tracks from *The Day The Country Died* album, which isn't a bad thing since it's one for the ages. If anything, they're a better live band now than they were in the '80s. The earlier EPs still kick ass and *Worlds Apart* pushes things in a more melodic direction without losing focus. They have an extensive catalogue and most of it is worthwhile.

The Canadian band's debut full-length *Incorrect Thoughts* is chock full of memorable, anthemic tunes like "The Big Picture" and "Dead At Birth," along with slam-bang rippers like "Death To The Sickoids" and "We're Alive." Their best-known song is probably the sarcastic "Slave To My Dick," which showed up on the *Let Them Eat Jellybeans* compilation. The original album is a *lot* better than the unauthorized CD Presents reissue, which had remixed versions of the songs, a different running order and an absolutely hideous orange cover that manipulated the original cover art. There are also two decent odds and ends compilations, *Death Was Too Kind* and *Pissed Off... With Good Reason*. You can avoid their tepid-sounding *No Wishes No Prayers* album on SST. I never heard the re-recorded version of *Incorrect Thoughts* or mid-2000s album *New Dark Age Parade*, but I can't imagine them being anywhere near the level of the earlier discs. Sadly, their vocalist Brian "Wimpy Roy" Goble and original drummer Dimwit (both of whom also played in DOA) are no longer with us. As I said, both have a place in my collection and it's a shame there's so much divisiveness.

Just about everyone has probably heard of Boston legends JERRY'S KIDS, who unleashed one of the greatest hardcore albums of all time, *Is This My World*, which boils over with a ferociousness and intensity few other bands ever achieved. But there are two other bands with the same name, albeit spelled differently. JERRY'S KIDZ were from New Mexico and their sole EP, 1984's *Marionetts* (also titled *Well Fed Society* on a Lost & Found Records bootleg), is a dose of ripping hardcore punk, featuring sputtering guitar leads and, while they're not the most-original sounding band, this 7" is worthy of a reissue. The final one, from Austin, spelled its name JERRYS KIDS and featured two future members of SCRATCH ACID, Rey Washam and Brett Bradford. Unfortunately, even with the talent involved, their album *What Can You Say? How Will They Take It?* is not-all-that-electrifying garagey punk / post-punk. It's hard not to love a song titled "Love Theme From Sharon Tate's" and there are moments but this is hardly crucial.

I mentioned X before. The one from LA put out some solid records—the *Los Angeles* and *Wild Gift* albums are packed with great songs like "Johny Hit and Run Paulene," "Los Angeles," "We're Desperate," and "Beyond and Back." The brooding "White Girl" is my favorite. Exene and John Doe's crooning was distinctive and the musical skill, particularly Billy Zoom's rockabilly-inflected guitar licks and Don Bonebrake's fluid drumming, was high. Unfortunately, there were a couple of awful albums and there's the matter of Exene and Billy's right-wing politics, so that detracts a bit (even if it's unfair). The Australian X put out a groundbreaking, ahead-of-its-time album, 1979's *Aspirations*. Driving churning punk / post-punk with slashing, sputtering guitar lines and relentless bass / drums. A sinister, acerbic classic. Ugly Pop put out a collection of 1977 demos a few years back, *X-Purts*, that's more straight-ahead punk but you can hear hints of what would follow. I've been listening to the Aussie band a *lot* more in recent years.

There were three STAINS that I've heard—the one from LA had a 1983 self-titled 12" on SST. That has some scorching metal-tinged hardcore and is one of the records on that label most deserving of a reissue. "Sick and Crazy" is a good summary of their sound. The STAINS from Austin eventually morphed into MDC and their sole release under that name was a 7" with the original versions of "John Wayne Was Nazi" and "Born To Die." Slower but also scrappy—two great songs. There was also a STAINS in the early 80s who were originally from Maine but eventually moved to Boston. They had a somewhat unclassifiable sound that fused '77 era punk (their 7" had DAMNED and SEX PISTOLS covers) with a slight arty twist. The recordings are very hit and miss (there's a compilation on Rave Up). They eventually changed their name to ICE AGE.

Before the LA hard rock band L7 (whose music hasn't aged well at all), there was L-SEVEN, a band from Detroit who had the sole release on the Touch & Go's Special Forces spinoff, a self-titled 7" from 1983. Their vocalist was the late Larissa Stolarchuk (AKA Strickland), who later wielded a mighty guitar for LAUGHING HYENAS. L-SEVEN had a pulsating, yet melodic post-punk sound. The three songs are full of shimmering guitar lines and a potent rhythmic undertow, along with Larissa's sweet-sounding vocals. Long out of print and I'd imagine likely to stay that way, which is a shame, as this is an underrated disc.

Then there's YOUTH BRIGADE, a name shared by bands from LA and DC. The former have a three decade career, the latter came and went very quickly in the early '80s but I listen to them a lot more these days. Their *Possible* EP, demo EP that was issued on Dischord in recent years, and tracks on *Flex Your Head* are pissed-off and raging as fuck. Some of the recordings by the LA band (with the Stern brothers, founders of BYO) haven't held up too well, to be honest, although there are still-enjoyable rousers like "Fight To Unite," "Violence," "Blown Away," and "Sink With California," which make up for not-so-great songs like "What Will The Revolution Change?" and "Alienated." There were two versions of *Sound and Fury*, from different recording sessions. The original one, later reissued as *Out Of Print*, is rougher-sounding, with an enjoyable West Coast meets UK / Oi! sound. The redone version subtracts and adds some songs and spruces up the production.

UK thrashers HERESY are probably better-known than their slightly more obscure Michigan brethren. The latter didn't release a whole lot back then—the *Driven* demo, a few songs on a cassette compilation and one posthumous 7". Whereas the UK version wore the SIEGE and DRI inspirations on their collective sleeves, the Michigan unit had a buzzsaw thrash attack with occasional metallic leads and hoarse vocals. Some raging stuff.

There wasn't one but two kickass bands with the name AGENT ORANGE. I'd imagine the west coast punk-meets-surf band is better-known and their *Bloodstains* single and subsequent album *Living In Darkness* still sound great 35 years later. That more than makes up for the mediocre releases that followed (although the *Breakdown* EP is pretty good). But if you haven't heard the Dutch AGENT ORANGE, you really need to. Raw, fast, blistering hardcore with a complete don't-give-two-fucks attitude. How can you not love a song with the title "Your Mother Sucks Cocks In Hell," especially when delivered at a full-throttle thrashing-bashing tempo? Impossible not to.

There was an American counterpart to the UK anarcho punk band CONFLICT—an early '80s band from Arizona fronted by a psychiatric nurse named Karen. They released a demo, *America's Right* (still have the copy I mailordered from Karen) and a 12" called *Last Hour*. Basic thrashy hardcore with occasional hints of melody that isn't exceedingly original but still worth a listen or

two and there was growth between the demo and 12." Puke N Vomit did a reissue of the 12" a few years ago. Another UK anarcho band with a US counterpart was the MOB. The US aggregation, from NYC, put out a couple of 7"s that had decent 1-2-1-2 rat-a-tat-tat-tat thrash and a terrible, more metal-sounding album later on.

The MISFITS from Lodi, NJ weren't the only US band with that name—there was also a MISFITS from Albany, NY, who later changed their name to the TRAGICS. Their 7" was reissued on Loud Punk in 2007. Trashy, fuzzed-out tuneful punk with Liz Davies' Styrene-esque vocals. "Mommi I'm A Misfit" is an ear-grabbing gem.

Long before the Santa Cruz band BL'AST—who, if you've never heard them, offer some crushing, BLACK FLAG-inspired mayhem—there was the Belgian band BLAST, who have been described as "proto-thrash." Their song "Damned Flame" is certainly quite speedy for 1972, when it was recorded. It was reissued a few years ago but even that's a bit expensive. Gloriously lo-fi, with buzzy and fuzzy guitar, drumming that can't quite keep up (especially for the B-side "Hope") but, yep, it's thrash. Maybe a bit more of historical curiosity than anything else.

Incidentally, one of the easiest "showdowns" involves two bands who started off as THE BEAT—the 2 Tone-era ska band the ENGLISH BEAT and mediocre power poppers PAUL COLLINS BEAT. I had only one friend who thought the Paul Collins one was better but his opinion is disqualified because he once told me that BLACK FLAG's *Damaged* was one of the worst records he ever heard. No wonder I'm not friends with the guy anymore...

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960; subvox82@gmail.com; subvox.blogspot.com; sonicoverload.net

There is currently a narrative in the media that populist nationalism is the rising ideological force of the 21st century, placing it on a similar trajectory as that of Marxism around 100 years ago. I can't say I totally agree with this analysis, but clearly a lot of people do, notably among them formerly fringe politicians who are now in the mainstream.

As an erstwhile young activist in my early twenties, I did my best to devour the defining tomes of anarchist and Situationist theory. I struggled to wrap my head around most of it. I quickly changed to reading about the Bonnot Gang knocking over banks and Severino Di Giovanni planting bombs which was more on the "practice" side than the "theory" one. So I wasn't intellectual enough to sink deep into a lot of theory, but I read one short book with some solid analysis that I have consistently returned to: Fredy Perlman's *Continuing Appeal of Nationalism*. Perlman's analysis of nationalism is that it is the "welding material" that enabled ruling elites to fuse the workers and middle classes with the ruling elite against their own interests. Nationalism as we know it is a product of the French and American Revolutions, and initially provided the ideological underpinnings of early industrial development. In America this meant breaking away from Britain and subjugating the native population as a means of capitalist accumulation, while in France it provided a motivating factor for Napoleon's wars of conquest that was an alternative to the revolutionary fervor that produced him. Since then rulers, and those who aspire to power, have found nationalism to be one of the most potent motivators to get masses of people to act in their interest.

Perhaps the most horrific example of this is the World Wars of the early 20th Century where the working classes of rival nations slaughtered each other in great quantities for the benefit of their respective ruling elites. Nationalism came to the rescue of Marxist revolutionaries just as it did to Napoleon as a motivating factor for Communist Russia and China and continues for North Korea and Cuba. Now the vulgar nationalism of the radical right is on the rise again. Pronounced dead after the defeat of fascism in the Second World War, it is back in the mainstream. At the same time, spending on arms is rising and old tropes about nations being in Darwinian competition are back up the flagpole. If you scratch out the names of the politicians and change around the scapegoated minority groups the tone and tenor remind one of the run up to those horrific conflicts of the 20th Century.

Just before the First World War broke out, there were many people who thought that war between nations was going to become a thing of the past because what we now call globalization was bringing people together. Trains and telegraphs were connecting ordinary people across borders and regions at an unprecedented rate. This popular and economic integration was supposed to make war impossible. But nationalism was used to fan flames of violence that resulted in not one, but two savage World Wars. Today people say the same kind of things, that integrated economies and social networks will prevent the next war. Meanwhile, politicians are building up armies, buying weapons and campaigning on racial and ethnic resentment. Where did this lead in the past? And how do we think it will lead somewhere different this time?

I am not a terribly tech-savvy person. But I do use a smartphone for communication and listening to music every day. I am consistently shocked at how accurate my phone's algorithms are at predicting my musical taste. I open my phone to creepily accurate playlists of music I would listen to. Perhaps even more eerie is the fact that my phone sent me updates letting me know that new albums have been released by Career Suicide, Rotten Mind, and Exit Order, eaning that I find out about DIY punk from Google before I find out about it out from *Maximum Rocknroll* or any other trusted source. While part of me is happy to have the information, the other part is rather spooked that this corporation has such a intimate level of insight into my musical tastes.

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Enough politics from me, whatever happened to punk rock? America might be headed towards some kind of totalitarian dystopia, but we still have the escapism of records and music. For me lately it's been Dutch and Belgian punk from the early days. I will get to the big names (Kids, Ivy Green and so on) later, for now let's talk about the cult favorites, Chainsaw and Filth.

Chainsaw from Brussels were one of the first Belgian punk bands after the Kids, and their 7" was the first Belgian punk vinyl. They have one 7" and it stands among the very best of '77 Euro punk. Four pure blasts of raw punk power that have lost none of that primal energy even after 40 years. From the photos on the cover these guys look like they were real punk rebels out to rage and shock. The guitar tone on this record is perfect (dare I saw "buzzsaw" in nature). The riffs are jagged and rough and the vocals snotty and pissed off. You really couldn't ask for more from a '77 punk 7". I'm told one of the ex members was pivotal in starting techno a few years later.

Another personal favorite is Filth's *Don't Hide Your Hate* 7" from 1978 on the very cool Dutch label Plurex. The title track is a true '77 punk anthem and towers over the other two tracks on this ripper. If you aren't pogoing along and pumping your fist while refusing to hide your hate, you probably are in the wrong youth cult. "*Don't hide your hate / we're gonna turn them down / don't hide your hate / no one can stop us now.*" This band appears to have caused something of a stir in their part of Amsterdam with their shocking antics, but

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quickly exchanged punk venom for a more polished pop / new wave sound, opened for the Clash, then broke up. We have this 7" to remember the good times by though.

There is a cool Dutch punk band called Panic. They have an LP that is pretty good, with one stand out track "Requiem for Martin Heidegger." It's catchy, rollicking, snotty punk, but this song is immeasurably enhanced by the vintage video now accessible on Youtube. The video catches this band tearing things up live and acting stupid, with frequent cuts to the manager of the bar where the video is being filmed. He looks so square and pissesd off. I crack up every time the camera cuts to this mustachioed wet blanket as the punks throw beer and trash his venue.

Last year's *Subnormal Girls* LP compilation was one of the best archival punk collections in recent memory, and Waiting Room Records are back with a second volume of international femme-punk obscurities from 1979 to 1984. There's a handful of selections this time around that have been included in some other really great (and for the most part, still in-print) reissue efforts over the last few years, but if you've slept on picking up, say, the *Life It's A Joke / We Live In A System* anthology LP that Softspot Music did for spiky synth-wielding Belgian anarcho-punks KEBAB, or Danger Records' 7" re-release of the three songs that Austria's PLASTIX had originally contributed to the *Die Tödliche Dosis* compilation in 1981, this might be the motivation that you need to finally remedy that. A few other highlights from the compilation's "previously rescued from the dustbin of history" faction: "Herpes Simplex" by hallucinatory minimalist French No Wave duo ROSA YEMEN, whose amazing 1979 EP was included in the expanded 2015 reissue of vocalist/guitarist LIZZY MERCIER DESCLOUX's solo *Press Color* LP; "Double Acting" from moody Danish art-punks TEE VEE POP (track down their criminally overlooked *Only Years* anthology LP from 2013!); and a stuttering DIY détournement of the riff from KRAFTWERK's "The Model" called "Creeps" by Iceland's Q4U, presented in a slightly later version from the one on Dark Entries' *Q1 1980-1983* LP spanning the band's progression from rudimentary punks to stark coldwavers.

That being said, the truly deep cuts on *Subnormal Girls* are what really warrant your attention, not to mention the high cost of postage if you don't live near Germany. The lone single from mysterious Welsh post-punks VAIN AIMS has been one of my holy grails for awhile, one of those records that is so elusive and rare that I'm not entirely sure it actually exists—feel free to send me a copy to prove me wrong, though! The B-side of that 7" ("Count") is included here, and it's an absolutely perfect slice of rough-around-the-edges femme-punk, with a wildly zigzagging bassline, some scratchy guitar and the deadpan recitation of lines as brilliant as *"he was the man of my dreams / I think I had a nightmare."* I've extolled the virtues of UKDIY one-single wonders OCCULT CHEMISTRY in this column before, and there's a reason why their song "Fire" is basically a permanent part of my arsenal alongside my MO-DETTES and DELTA 5 records when I DJ out at bars. Other personal faves on this volume include Québécoise punkers TÉRAPI's jagged new wave ripper "Camisole," with urgently snapped vocals *en français* and warbling, '60s garage-trash-style organ, and "Lost In Madagascar" by Australia's ANNE CESSNA & ESSENDON AIRPORT, a totally warped minimal wave classic based around giddy sing-song lyrics nearly obscured by kaleidoscopic buzzes, whirrs and beeps of synth. Yet another essential compilation in this series (with hopefully many more to come), and it's limited to a mere 300 copies—buy now or cry later! (Waiting Room, waitingroomrecords.bandcamp.com)

` Sharp-cornered post-punk with skronky saxophone seems to be enjoying somewhat of a underground renaissance these days (a development that I thoroughly back), although BLANK SQUARE's sax squeals deviate from the two prevailing influences of most of their peers—namely, the fiery dub / punk synthesis of Rough Trade's late '70s / early '80s UK brigade or CONTORTIONS-worshipping No Wave dancefloor deconstruction. Rather, their debut LP *Animal I* has all of the clenched-jaw intensity of the more art-damaged bands operating on the early '80s Southern California / SST Records hardcore axis (okay, maybe just SACCHARINE TRUST), with a tightly-knotted rhythm section pummeling away behind raw-throated shouts and saxophone blurting. But alongside the moments of violent punk whiplash like the breathless 48 seconds of "Put A Lid On It," there's also a more foreboding and slow-burning side to BLANK SQUARE (see: "I Was High" and "Empty Head") that has invited some pretty dead-on comparisons to the FLESH EATERS' psychedelic hellfire rave-ups that I won't argue with. Don't let this one get lost amidst the endless procession of THEE OH SEES records flooding the Castle Face roster. (Castle Face, blanksquared.bandcamp.com)

French quartet SIDA have just released their first LP after a handful of cassette and singles going back to 2010, and whenever I hear people casually dropping names like NERVOUS GENDER or the SCREAMERS in reference to modern synth-punk outfits, this is the sort of terrifyingly unhinged, born-in-flames noise that I always hope for and very rarely actually find. If anything, the synth plays a supporting role here to the seething, snarled delivery of vocalist Maïssa (the brains behind one-woman minimal wave project THÉORÈME), adding a blown-out and appropriately harrowing electronic texture to her spitting and howling. The bleak, serrated sheet-metal noise of "Commercial" and "Le Crève" immediately brings to mind the more punishing and confrontational No Wave faction that included THEORETICAL GIRLS or pretty much anything that LYDIA LUNCH was involved with (particularly TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS / 8 EYED SPY), filtered through the distinctly 21st century techno-dystopian nightmare lens of like-minded contemporary French post-punk groups like LE CHEMIN DE LA HONTE and DELACAVE (SIDA shares their drummer with the latter). It's not all quick flicks of the switchblade here, though—"Enterrement de Vie" grinds on a drone of spin-cycle drumming, synth static and distorted bad trip vocals for a sprawling nine minutes that makes "Death Valley '69" sound like the fucking MONKEES. C'est chouette! (Population / Le Turc Mecanique, population-label.bandcamp.com)

From the vault of underrated and neglected early '80s US post-punk: the VERGE started out around 1980 or 1981 in Albany, New York, which is one of those perfectly nondescript places that I've often heard described as being a ideal stand-in for generic city settings in TV and film productions, but otherwise stuck in the overwhelming cultural shadow of New York City. The group's only release was 1983's four-song *Habitual* EP, which completely ignores the frenetic disco-not-disco dance leanings and mangled No Wave freakouts that dominated the NYC underground at the dawn of the '80s, aligning itself more closely with the desperate and dissonant post-punk approach of bands like MISSION OF BURMA, NATIVE TONGUE, or even the PROLETARIAT further east down I-90 in Boston—slightly off-kilter rhythms, razor-sharp bass hooks, trebly slashes of guitar, and

dual (and sometimes dueling) matter-of-fact vocals. But the VERGE were also obviously affected by the reverberations from UK post-punk's initial waves, as evidenced by the hyper-angular choppiness and lyrical agitprop of "Tradition" that could pass for an American interpretation of GANG OF FOUR (or is that a proto-FUGAZI?). It kind of blows my mind that none of these songs have found their way onto Hyped to Death's extensive *Homework* compilation series chronicling the late '70s / early '80s US DIY weirdo-punk scene, but picking up those loose threads is essentially why this column exists, right?

Say hey! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA, digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds: futuresandpasts.org

Ten Years

The sound of fireworks blend in with the sound of teargas grenades being fired at us and our lungs fill with gas as we run in no direction but away. Until we can't physically run anymore and we hide in a bush at the park. Two minutes later we're joined by another group. They don't seem as scared as we are and keep telling jokes and laughing. " Shut the fuck up, or we'll throw you out back there" my friend angrily hisses at the four of them. Later we find out they're a bunch of fourteen-year-olds, and we feel mature, experienced, superior with our sixteen years of age. Hours later we're back at my friend's place, where we quietly undress and shower while our teargas filled clothes tumble around in the washing machine, and we thank a higher power that we have the apartment to ourselves. We fall asleep to news images of a burning police van and say to each other: "Hell yeah, tomorrow we'll win, and we'll march to Ungdomshuset, and they'll never dare to take it from us again."

I'm about to tell a sad story that yet has a happy ending. Many of you are probably familiar with the current venue Ungdomshuset located in Copenhagen since 2008, but the story behind the house goes way back.

March 1st marked the ten-year anniversary of the eviction of the former Ungdomshuset located on Jagtvej 69 in Copenhagen. Ungdomshuset was a venue and social center that dated back to 1982, but the story of the building dates all the way back to 1897 where the house was built by the labor movement.

Flash forward to the 1980s. Youth unemployment, homelessness and the longing for a self-governed *Ungdomshus* (literally "Youth House") led a group of teenagers and children to squat empty buildings. This marked the beginning of the Copenhagen *BZ* squatter's movement. Eventually, the Copenhagen municipality handed over the building on Jagtvej 69 to "the youth of Copenhagen" in 1982 and Ungdomshuset was a reality.

Municipal politics led to the house being put up for sale in 1999, and the legal ownership of the house ended up in the hands of a ultra right-wing Christian church, whose leader still strongly believes that God spoke to her and requested that she saved the souls of the forsaken youths of Ungdomshuset. You can't even make this stuff up. This change in ownership eventually led to Ungdomshuset changing status to an illegal squat and then to the eviction on March 1, 2007.

But how did I end up on the streets a cold March Friday night running from police vans and tear gas?

I first visited Ungdomshuset in 2006. I was fifteen and attended the annual K-town Festival, I remember drinking lukewarm cheap beer while seeing NIGHTMARE (Japan) and SKITKIDS (Sweden), being surrounded by thousands of punx from all over the world and not feeling nearly punk enough to be there. But I didn't want it to end. My first time at Ungdomshuset was in a way terrifying; I was in a chaos of drunk people with studded vests and piercings, and I realized that punk was as uncontrollable as I thought it was. At the same time, this was a life changing event for me. I felt like I was welcome, I was treated well, even with my baby-punk awkwardness, skull-printed vans and way too much black eyeliner like a mall goth.

By then, Ungdomshuset was probably already doomed and destined to be destroyed

The eviction of Ungdomshuset sparked a flame in the entire Copenhagen youth. Ungdomshuset had gained sympathy through successful campaigns, and it seemed like everyone could understand the unfairness of the eviction. Riots raged in Copenhagen for the entire weekend and were quickly labelled the biggest riots in Denmark since WWII. Demonstrations attracted thousands, and it seemed like all of Copenhagen was in a state of emergency and chock. It was clear that nothing could move forward while the building was still there, in the hands of a right-wing Christian group.

Monday morning a huge silver crane begin tearing Ungdomshuset down, piece for piece. The excuse was that the house was too old and moldy. Maybe it was true—old buildings are hard to maintain. The riots turned into a mourning mob watching what in our eyes was a massacre. We stood in the cold for two days until the entire building was gone, talking, crying, hugging, screaming, making new friends. The next time I would see my new friends, the crowd around us had already grown bigger.

During the last days of Ungdomshuset, the scene had grown bigger, but the eviction fueled the flames, and the crowd of Ungdomshuset supporters was enormous. Demonstrations of 10,000–15,000 people were no longer an unusual sight in Copenhagen, a city of 1 million.

As getting Ungdomshuset back was now in every way impossible, the struggle for a new Ungdomshuset began. The reasoning was that since the city had given the house as a gift to the youth, they couldn't just sell it and let someone else take it. They owed us, the youth, a new house. With this in our heads, we marched in demonstrations week after week. There were happenings, shows, people's kitchens, and other events to support the struggle happening all over the city, sometimes at least once a day. And while there were a few clashes, the unity in the huge scene was strong in my eyes. We had something to fight for and had to stick together.

To be honest, this was one of the best periods of my adolescence. I was soon an active part of the struggle for a new house, I was making tons of new friends, and for the first time in my life I was part of something bigger. Me and my crew spent the spring and summer days in parks and squares with my boombox blasting mixtapes with PARAGRAF 119, WRETCHED, AMEBIX, BIKINI KILL, TRAGEDY, local heroes THE ASSASSINATORS and NUCLEAR DEATH TERROR to name a few favorites. A huge part of my political schooling took place in this period as well. The older crowds took the time to spread information on veganism, anti-capitalism, feminism, DIY and much more in seminars and zines to school the new-comers in the scene. It was the summer of my life.

By fall, this struggle had been going on for six months, and the actions and demonstrations were not slowing down. The Danish police force was tired out and understaffed from staffing the weekly demonstrations and happenings in the city. This would spark negotiations with the city for a new house to give to the youths to create a "new" Ungdomshuset. In spring 2008, the mayor and city municipality offered a house in Northwest Copenhagen. The atmosphere was euphoric, yet it was hard to believe that

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they caved in, that we won. Could we really trust the city municipality, the people we seemed to be fighting against? Yet by summer we could step foot into the new house, located on Dortheavej 61. Where Ungdomshuset is still located, and running as a venue and social center today.

Ungdomshuset is and was important for how the punk scene in Copenhagen thrives. It doesn't make the entire punk scene, and there are things going on in many other places in the city. But Ungdomshuset provides a social center with concerts, rehearsal spaces, soup kitchens, art, political meetings and more. It's a place where new bands can practice and perform in front of an audience with little or no experience, while also serving as a central city for more established touring (and local) bands. In 2016, Ungdomshuset hosted 81 music events with 388 bands (162 of those were foreign bands). It's an important part of not only the underground anti-capitalist music scene, not only in Copenhagen, but in all of Europe. Ungdomshuset strives to create a place free from many of the oppressive structures in society, and where individuals and collectives and experiment, grow and live out their dreams. These are only ideals, nothing is perfect, and it's always possible to improve and grow. Ungdomshuset isn't flawless, and faults should be pointed out and worked on, yet this shouldn't overshadow the importance of the house.

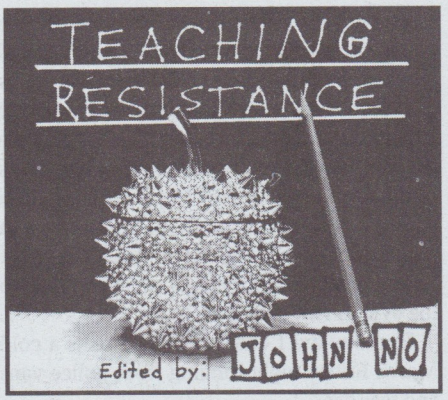
Anniversaries are always filled with nostalgia and remorse. The same goes for youth and teenage years. It's important to not romanticize the period from March 2007 to summer 2008. Those days were also rough, the scene was divided in some ways then too and no heroes should be praised from that time, or any other time for that matter. Speaking of my own personal life, my life sure is better and happier than when I was sixteen, trying to fit into a new scene while constantly growing and thereby changing. Yet the story of "back then" is important to tell, and separating the nostalgia from the true story is probably not possible for those who were involved then, including myself.

This story should also remind everyone to value what they have. The current Ungdomshuset isn't perfect (and neither was the former house, I am sure). But it's a precious thing that us in the Copenhagen scene and our visitors need to take care of. The scene fought so hard for it 10 years ago. It's not a thing to take for granted.

ENDNOTES:

1) I've decided to tell this story from my own perspective, in essay form. There are many ways to tell the story, and many different versions and experiences. In March 2007, I was a sixteen-year-old high school student living in Copenhagen. I had visited *Ungdomshuset* a handful of times, but I didn't actively take part in the house. I'm sure those who took an active part would tell a different story and have different experiences. This column only reflects my own experience of going from a gig-goer to an active part in my local punk and political scene, sparked by the eviction of Ungdomshuset.

2) Dedicated to T. It's weird writing about times with someone who isn't here anymore. RIP.



The Teaching Resistance column is normally from the perspective of primary and secondary-level teachers (K-12) and other community-based educators, like free school and community college teachers, who have to use a lot of specific pedagogy—teaching practice and methods designed to reach as many students as possible, and to genuinely help them academically grow. Many (not all!) professors at the university level take the standard professorial approach of talking at their students, then making them read something they (or their friends) probably wrote, then leaving them to their own devices and grading them based on how prepared they were for their class prior to entering it. It is often a competitive environment for students, not built for educational nurturing as primary / secondary education is, and that is why there are not a lot of punk professors writing for this column.

However, one class of teachers at the university level does have to engage in robust pedagogy, and that is the teaching assistant. The TA sits down with students, constructively assesses their work, and helps make difficult material accessible. The teaching assistant should probably get paid at least as much as a tenured professor, but that's a subject for another column. This month's Teaching Resistance is from Keith Riley, who is a teaching assistant at a college in Philadelphia, and combines a story of the struggle to help college students understand a powerful, complex subject (The Black Panther movement) that is distant from many of their own life experiences, with a review of the educational potential of one of the most well-designed museum exhibits the Bay Area has ever seen—the Black Panther exhibit at the Oakland Museum. Keith can be contacted directly at tuf76411@temple.edu.

"Capitalism Plus Racism Breeds Fascism"
The Black Panthers Exhibit and the Hopes of a Better History Class

By Keith Riley

"All the men who work the land
Should evaluate themselves and take a stand
Can't they see beyond the rhetoric?
The lies and the promises that don't mean shit
And all the men who learned to hate them"
—Minutemen, "Themselves," 1984

"Makes me wanna holler
The way they do my life"
—Marvin Gaye, "Inner City Blues," 1971

I spent the last six months employed as a Teaching Assistant for a class on protest movements throughout US History at a college in North Philadelphia. While I did occasionally develop passing relationships with the students, the job mostly consisted of a lot of Friday nights huddled over a stack of one hundred and twenty of their papers in a dimly lit library. Grading papers can switch from tedious to nauseating pretty fast, but it does have its occasional moments of clarity. By reading stacks of these student papers, I found out how they conceived of the past, what they latched onto and how they applied it to their own lives. It all had a weird type of mythos attached to it. No matter what was stressed in the class, the kids' papers reflected their own conclusions. A sort of mismatch of ideas and sometimes fabricated events that reflected what they wanted the past to be. A lot of the time, what they wanted they wanted history to be was over with quickly, so they could leave class and move onto stuff about which they actually cared. But, sometimes, their renderings had deeper, more confounding implications.

One place I saw this a lot was with the students' discussions of the Black Panther Party. Unfortunately, the class only briefly covered them, but they somehow kept coming up in these papers. They were fascinated by the Panthers. For many students, the Panthers became a changing mechanism, a foil of sorts, to speak to their own feelings about protest and race relations. "The Black Panthers were founded by Malcolm X, they staged riots across the country after MLK's assassination, all their protests ended in violence, they hated

white people, and they remained unable to attract a significant following," they repeatedly argued. They got it so wrong. Their fascination was misdirected. As someone also fascinated by the Black Panthers, I perhaps futilely tried to convince them otherwise them by scribbling comments on the side of the page. "The Panthers favored self-defense not violence in and of itself." "The Panthers collaborated and formed coalitions with other left groups of numerous ethnic communities," I would write. But, there's only much marginalia a student will actually read before flipping to the final page where the grade is written.

I didn't have much say in the curriculum of the class last semester, but I wish I could've redirected this interest in some way that the students would actually find meaningful. I wish they had been to the Oakland Museum's exhibit *All Power to the People: The Black Panthers at 50* staged in Oakland, California—the Black Panthers' birthplace. The exhibit tackled these common negative perceptions aimed at discrediting the Party's many successes and redirects society's obsession with the Party to a place that reflects the successes that emerge from a leftist political model like the one that the Panthers implemented. Rather than focusing on the political turmoil between Party leaders Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton like PBS's documentary *Vanguard of the Revolution* or fixating on their militant, gun-touting image as the mainstream news so often did, *All Power to the People* focuses on the legitimate community grievances that the Party responded to, the programs they developed, the coalitions they built, and the real progress they made. All this mixed up with some solid analysis of J. Edgar Hoover's evil plans to destroy and discredit the Black Panthers' good intentions and you've really got a pretty radical telling of history presented in a fun, approachable manner, a history that many have tried to ignore or deliberately malign. Sure, for leftists, residents of Black neighborhoods around the country who experienced the Panthers' impact, historians, and the occasional Berkeley resident who listens to *Democracy Now!* on their way to work, this stuff is old news. It might be easy for many to critique the exhibit for not including this or overlooking that. But, if the analysis of college freshmen's final exams is any indication of how people view the Black Panther Party, the information in this exhibition really has the potential to re-frame history in important ways for many people. An important teaching tool, to say the least.

The exhibit opens with the context of the Black Panther Party's formation. Maps that show the government-funded, real estate red-lining present in the black neighborhoods of the East Bay—measures that prevented families in North, West, and portions of East Oakland (East Oakland was mostly white until the 1950s / '60s), North Richmond, South Berkeley, and other neighborhoods from receiving government loans to fix up their homes and move to new neighborhoods, line the gallery walls. Newspaper articles detailing the 1965 Watts Rebellion in Los Angeles and the 1966 Hunters Point neighborhood uprising in San Francisco appear as well. The room also features the remnants of ornate, intricately designed columns, doorknobs, and front doors that formerly adorned West Oakland Victorian homes owned by Black families. These structures were later destroyed by city government in the Oak Center Redevelopment Plan of 1965, a year prior to the Party's formation. This urban renewal project destroyed thousands of historic homes—some of the oldest in the city—to make way for the high-rise Acorn housing projects that now overlook the city's Lower Bottoms neighborhood. As the exhibit alludes, these governmental initiatives aimed at perpetuating white supremacy made the Bay Area's lower income neighborhoods, mostly housing immigrants and people of color, ripe for insurrection and leftist organizing. In this context, the Black Panthers' formation no longer seems radical or dangerous, but efficient and necessary.

In the next room, the culmination of this context proverbially beats the viewer over the head in the form of giant black walls that lists the Party's 1966 Ten Point Program in luminous white font. The Program called for decent housing, an end to police violence, an end to war, furthered social programs, prison abolition, Black self-determination, among other initiatives aimed at improving Black neighborhood conditions that still undoubtedly resonate today. As I looked upon the wall, I overheard a mother explaining Point Five—"We Want Education For Our People that Exposes the True Nature of this Decadent American Society. We Want Education that Teaches Us Our True History and Our Role in the Present-Day Society"—to her small child. I remembered reading the Ten Point Program for the first time in high school and how excitingly radical the wording of that statement sounded at a young age. (This kid was way younger.) Yet, in the spirit of the exhibit, the mother explained the point to the child in a manner that stressed how essential Black historical representation was during the mid-1960s. The Point was not a radical one, but one dear to the hearts of students and teachers alike across the country who wish to see their communities represented positively and honestly in school curriculums. "Back then, Black people were often portrayed as not as good as white people and teachers didn't tell kids about the bad things the United States did to Black people and a lot of other people too. The Black Panthers wanted to change that," the mother said. I'd imagine the next moment was one that every leftist educator dreams of. From the look on the child's face, it seemed like they understood. The kid got it. This was the interaction I wanted to have with my students after I read their final exams. I wanted them to get it too. I wanted them to see the merit embedded in the Panthers' Ten Point Program. It seemed like everyone in that gallery certainly did.

The exhibit continued and the myths perpetuated in these aforementioned papers were continually disproven in various panels and displays. The Panthers were not racial separatists, but Black activists who wished to partner with other leftists across ethnic lines. They formed coalitions with groups like the American Indian Movement, the White Panthers, the Brown Berets, I Wor Kuen, the Red Guard, the SF-Mission District's own Los Siete de la Raza, among other radical groups. Two-thirds of the Party's members were women. They served breakfast to children in low-income neighborhoods across the country. They provided free ambulance services, allowing community residents to avoid the steep medical fees associated with these expensive rides. They provided sickle cell anemia testing and set up free medical clinics, some of which still exist in cities like Berkeley and Oakland. They even set up schools for children that adhered to Point Five of the Platform, like the Oakland Community School in East Oakland. Above all, they demonstrated the many successes inherent in a leftist political model when organized correctly and the need for community-driven social programs to benefit society's most vulnerable. And for this the U.S. government brutally dismantled them.

The Black Panther Party is undoubtedly the United States' most important—not to mention successful—leftist political organization of the last fifty years or more. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, no large-scale history exhibit has given them much of a fair shake until the Oakland Museum's recent renderings. In the age of a Donald Trump presidency, the example of the Panthers represented in this exhibit could not be more important. The phrase "Capitalism Plus Racism Breeds Fascism" printed on the cover of 1969 Black Panther newspaper reads like a recipe for our current predicaments. This paper was, in fact, featured in the exhibit. I'm sure that many others took note of the slogan's unfortunate timelessness.

It is because of this that I hope that those involved in presenting the past—teachers of

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all levels, historians, writers, museum curators, and activists who print catchy slogans that evoke the past on cardboard signs—remember the example of *All Power to the People* and its attempt to showcase the strengths, essentialness, and even modern applicability of the Black Panther Party's politics. Our work should have a political purpose. It should aim to undermine and de-legitimize racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and all capitalist-driven structures of oppression. Our analysis must reject the police and the prison industrial complex that their occupation perpetuates. Renderings of the past should reveal the benefits of community-driven social programs and the left's historic investment in these programs' creation. Let's convince our students and those who will listen to us of a better way of doing things, of the moral bankruptcy of Donald Trump. A knowledge of the past can not defeat fascism on its own. Yet, as the *All Power to the People* exhibit shows, getting everyone on a similar page certainly aids in eventual progress.

"We're striking back baby and you can find me in the vanguard."

—Sheer Mag, "Can't Stop Fighting," 2016

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column, which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.

Hito Steyerl's video piece, "Is the Museum a Battlefield," included in the Istanbul Biennial, traces a bullet used to kill 39 PKK fighters, one of whom was a friend of hers, all the way back to the Art Institute of Chicago. The Art Institute was showing her work. A piece in the show memorialized the life and struggles of Hito's friend who was killed, Andrea Wolf. General Dynamics is the arms manufacturer actually produced the 20mm ammunition that killed her friend and also happens to fund The Art Institute of Chicago.

Wigbertson G.S.J. Isenia identifies this Steyerl piece in line with what Lucy Lippard calls activist artworks like this: a Trojan Horse. She believes that activist art that works itself into institutions but can critique the very existence of institutions themselves is the imperative of upholding all that those institutions claim to do.

Last week, there was a controversy about language in the performer's contract for South By Southwest. SXSW includes language in their contract that prohibits artists from other countries from playing non-SXSW showcases and threatens to hand over offenders to this clause to immigration enforcement. This clause was removed to the delight of independent musicians and labels who were still very eager to play their showcases.

For those of you who aren't familiar with South By Southwest, it is innately a networking event for media producers. Most of us are probably most familiar with SXSW's musical and film showcases. Other presences at the festival are perhaps a bit removed from our reality. They range from technologies like Google Glass and Airbnb to the director of the FBI speaking about digital safety under state surveillance.

The liberal imperative here would represent a small change in a legal contract that affects a small privileged group of people as a win. As radicals we shouldn't accept a very small step forward as anything other than what it is. Otherwise, we risk obscuring further harm to those who this festival does impact on a *daily* basis.

Admittedly, I'm never going to be in a situation where I can pretend to boycott SXSW for any reason. I'll never go and I'll never play and I've already been in dead-end conversations with my friends who do for over fifteen years. I'll never take a corporate sponsorship so I'll never know about the mythical purifying properties of money and free shoes. To that point I'm also not interested in minimizing the efforts of people who put themselves forward to make this stand. Rather, I'd like to more clearly enumerate what exactly is at stake and what is possible.

Two years ago a small piñata stand in Austin was illegally completely demolished by a landlord seeking to evict the family business to profit from the available space during SXSW activities. While this eventually blew up in the landlord's face because of a formal boycott that was called after media attention it likely wouldn't have happened if SXSW didn't foment an urban land grab that disproportionately affects poor people of color.

This act of displacement got special attention because of how brazenly illegally the landlord behaved. The far more familiar story however is that there are always completely legal ways to displace people. The risk of recuperation in these small instances of solidarity that SXSW shows with a small and fairly privileged group of people as well as with an egregious and illegal demolition of a small minority-owned business is something to be concerned about.

Over the last two years in Los Angeles the groups Defend Boyle Heights and Boyle Heights Alliance Against Artwashing and Displacement have been working on a campaign of boycott and divestment to the influx of galleries in the neighborhood of Boyle Heights. After years of direct action, coalition building, and media attention that includes direct statements, the gallery PSSST finally closed its doors. While many people feel that art galleries are innocuous or even *positive* developments to a community BHAAAD explains, "The connection between opening institutional art spaces , artist studios , and luxury businesses and the creation of a real estate frontier (gentrification) is ridiculously , painfully , well documented and obvious ."

PSSST was a particularly interesting and relevant example because they worked to promote queer artists and artists of color. After the tragic Pulse nightclub shooting PSSST branded itself as a "queer safe space." The coalitions were not daunted by this co-optation of identity as an excuse to not prioritize the long-standing needs of the local community. In the statement "Queer Real Estate Is Not Queer Safety" they explain: "The argument that queer spaces (such as PSSST) are necessary to relieve the violence of everyday life as queer people demands we push back and assert that Boyle Heights is full of low-income queer people , and that gentrification and homelessness are also imperative , intersectional queer issues ".

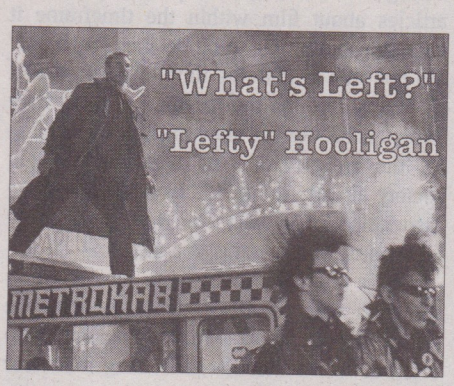
Punk has long been lost to the motions of recuperation. At this point, whether we like it or not, our visual and sonic aesthetics are attached to the same motions as any fashion or fad. We come back to what we left behind and it's all so obvious and accessible. Still, there's a direct connection to how displacement is facilitated and accelerated by outside cultural institutions like record labels, large festivals, museums, galleries, and corporate sponsorship.

Often the excuses for indulging in these opportunities to make money relate to our communities' inability to sustain paying artists. The idea that we make culture for each other in good faith and without the need for financial compensation can be complicated when our communities prioritize continually

ceding resources towards the same people who always get them. Namely, white people, cis people, and men. In this bad faith environment it can become logical for bands who don't normally get attention or credence in a toxic but underground scene to look elsewhere for validation and compensation.

So, the possibilities for interventions and solutions here are rife. We *can* do things dynamically. Divest in the same white / male bands, divest from corporate initiatives in our creative spaces, divest in the media outlets that will assign our work and lives a marketing demographic. And when we do find ourselves weighing the cost benefit analysis of playing the company party or the art gallery, make sure everyone gets what they need and *DESTROY EVERYTHING.*

To read Defend Boyle Heights and BHAAAD's statements visit alianzacontraartwashing.org.



It's a classic picture; an iconic, grainy, black-and-white photo of Fidel Castro addressing an unseen crowd, flanked by Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos. Three handsome Latin men in the ultimate romantic revolutionary photo-op. Within ten months of the Cuban revolution's triumph in January, 1959, Cienfuegos died under somewhat mysterious circumstances amid rumors that Castro had him eliminated because he was too popular. And nearly nine years later, Che was hunted down and killed in the jungles of Bolivia under CIA direction, having been reluctant to return to Cuba after Castro made public Guevara's secret "farewell letter" surrounded by rumors of a falling out between the two.

With Fidel's death in November of last year, the top three leaders of the Cuban Revolution are now all dead. Fidel continued to smoke Cuban cigars and drink Cuban rum until a few months before his demise at 90 years of age. Supporters of the Cuban revolution considered this symbolic of the resiliency of the socialist project while its enemies of its doddering senility. But this isn't yet another case of Schrödinger's cats and quantum simultaneity. Marxism and the Left are definitely on the ropes. This month I'll discuss the first of a handful of principal issues troubling the Left, without much hope of transcending any of them.

SECTARIANISM OR THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

Sectarianism figures as the most overt and persistent problem on the Left. The term originally refers to religious conflicts where it was important to establish that you had a direct line to the almighty, and therefore a need to refute, persecute, or even kill anyone who disputed your claim. The idea here is that you and your group of fellow believers have the truth and those who disagree should be subject to everything from scorn and contempt to terror and death because they're wrong. The claim to religious truth covers not just major differences like the nature of god (one indivisible vs. three-in-one vs. multiple, transcendent vs. imminent) but also to minor matters like whether to make the sign of the cross with two vs. three fingers or to baptize by dunking an individual's head first vs. feet first.

But religion certainly doesn't have a monopoly on claims to the truth. Politics rivals religion in the acrimony it often generates, and ranks with money and sex as one of the top four topics that shouldn't be discussed in polite company. Political sectarians certainly parallel their religious counterparts in emphasizing the absolute truth of their principles over all others, making every minor disagreement into the basis for fundamental differences, seeing the deadliest of enemies in their closest rivals, putting purity of dogma over tactical advantage, refusing to compromise or alter their aims, and proclaiming their pride at being against the stream. To be fair, real differences do exist between groups and within organizations. Anarchists and Marxists differ fundamentally on the nature and use of state power (dominant autonomous institution to be smashed vs instrumentality of class rule to be seized). Social democrats and Leninists disagree essentially on the organization and role of the political party (mass democratic party vs vanguard party). Given such fundamental differences, political conflicts and opposition are bound to occur when a common action or program is undertaken. But it's important to define those differences that actually make a difference instead of always seeing fundamental differences where none exist.

On the Left, Marxism exacerbates the problem of sectarianism because of what Frederich Engels called the "theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific Socialism." It is unclear whether Karl Marx himself had such a rigid understanding of his doctrine. While he concurred with Engels in differentiating his socialism from the utopianism of prior socialist thinkers, Marx was by no means as crude or mechanistic in its application to the world of his day. What's more, Marx valued the correctness of his doctrine's methodology far more than he did the correctness of its conclusions. Science is based on statements of fact like "1 + 1 = 2," and so to claim that "1 + 1 = 3" for instance is not just wrong, it's unscientific. If socialism is a scientific doctrine, then statements by Marxist organization A that "the Assad regime in Syria is objectively anti-imperialist" are considered scientific fact. But what if Marxist organization B proclaims that "the Assad regime in Syria is objectively counterrevolutionary?" Just as 1 + 1 cannot be simultaneously 2 and 3, Assad's regime in Syria cannot be simultaneously objectively anti-imperialist and counterrevolutionary. Since both Marxist organizations A and B each claim to rely on scientific socialism to arrive at their contradictory conclusions, at least one of these statements must be objectively false.

Aside from the quantum physics fringe, science just doesn't work that way. Neither political formulation may be right, but someone certainly must be wrong; a sentiment that fuels the sectarian urge.

For Engels, the term scientific essentially meant dialectic. There is much debate about whether Marx subscribed wholeheartedly to Hegelian dialectics, or if his methodology was more complex. Whatever the case, subsequent Marxists like Lenin, Trotsky, and Mao considered Marxism to be fundamentally dialectical. And Mao entertained an open notion of dialectics where contradictions endlessly self-generated until certain contradictions were considered eternal. "Does 'one divide into two' or 'two fuse into one?' This question is a subject of debate in China and now here. This debate is a struggle between two conceptions of the world. One believes in struggle, the other in unity. The two sides have drawn a clear line between them and their arguments are diametrically opposed. Thus, you can see why one divides into two." (Free translation from the *Red Flag*, Peking, September 21, 1964) This is also a conception of the world as endless split and schism, of sectarianism run amok. Little wonder that the Maoist New Communist Movement in the United States at its height in the 1970s rivaled Trotskyism for ever-proliferating, constantly infighting groupuscules. It's no coincidence that Monty Python's film "Life of Brian," with its clever skit of the People's Front of Judea vs the Judean People's Front, came out in 1979.

The "one divide into two" quote came from

a pamphlet called "The Anti-Mass: Methods of Organization for Collectives" which first appeared in 1970-71. It was called a "moldy soup of McLuhanism, anarchism, William Burroughs, Maoism, and 'situationism'." The real Situationists of "Contradiction" called out the fake "situationists" of "Anti-Mass" for taking "a firm, principled position within the spectacle, titillating jaded movement post-graduates with neo-Maoist homilies and Madison Avenue salesmanship."

And so it went. Trotskyism, Maoism, and Situationism were perhaps the most sectarian tendencies on the Left, but Leftist sectarianism was by no means confined to them. With the defeat of the labor movement and the collapse of Leninist regimes in the twentieth century, we've come to a crisis of Marxism specifically and of the Left in general.

Increasingly marginalized revolutionaries sought to break with the senescent Left after 1991 and proffered innovations to its theory and politics in order to salvage what they could of Marxism. In the twenty-first century, this has amounted to rearguard discussions of insurrectionism, communization, Agamben, and social war. To quote Benjamin Noys, the "mixing-up of insurrectionist anarchism, the communist ultra-left, post-autonomists, anti-political currents, groups like the Invisible Committee, as well as more explicitly 'communizing' currents, such as Théorie Communiste" is what can be called today's Social War tendency. In retreat and lacking agency, visions narrow. Revolution becomes insurrection. Communism becomes communizing. The amorphous eclecticism of the Social War tendency offers not "a fresh new perspective for Marxist politics but a repeat of Kropotkinist and Sorelian critiques of Marxism with more theoretical sophistication" according to Donald Parkinson. In other words, more bad politics. And part of that bad politics is sectarianism. Witness the incessant political bickering between Tiqqun, Gilles Dauvé, and Théorie Communiste for starters, which no doubt sounds much more elegant in French.

Doris Lessing wrote in her introduction to "The Golden Notebook": "I think it is possible that Marxism was the first attempt, for our time, outside the formal religions, at a world-mind, a world ethic. It went wrong, could not prevent itself from dividing and sub-dividing, like all the other religions, into smaller and smaller chapels, sects and creeds. But it was an attempt." Perhaps sectarianism on the Left is inevitable as Lessing suggests. It can be contained and controlled however, something that is necessary to promote solidarity.

As a postscript, it is claimed that opportunism is the opposite of sectarianism because opportunists readily adapt their principles to circumstances, minimize the significance of internal disputes, consider even enemies as "the lesser evil," place tactical advantage over adherence to principles, willingly compromise, and gladly follow the mainstream. Whereas sectarians adamantly insist on their uniqueness, purity, and autonomy, opportunists willingly give up all three. Sectarianism insists on an uncompromising identity while opportunism readily dissolves itself into the greater movement. So while sectarians remain a constant pain-in-the-ass as long as they exist, opportunists happily sell out and fade away. Thus the problem of sectarianism persists while the problem of opportunism takes care of itself by simply evaporating.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA

Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com
Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
Facebook page: facebook.com/GAMatiasz
Writer Facebook page: facebook.com/GA-Matiasz-1729198467311786
Publishing Facebook page: facebook.com/62-Mile-Press-190746624637105
Publishing website: 62milepress.com

"There is no neutral body from which our bodies deviate. Society has written deep into each strand of tissue of every living person on earth. What it writes into the heart muscles of five star generals is distinct from what it writes in the pancreatic tissue and intestinal tracts of Black single mothers in Detroit, of Mexicana migrants in Fresno, but no body stands outside the consequences of injustice and inequality…What our bodies require in order to thrive, is what the world requires. If there is a map to get there, it can be found in the atlas of our skin and bone and blood, in the tracks of neurotransmitters and antibodies."
—Aurora Levins Morales, Kindling

There are three films that I have seen and loved in theaters lately: *Moonlight, I Am Not Your Negro,* and *Get Out.* Each one of these films has received coveted critical praise and thousands of unofficial yet positive internet reviews—and gifs. OK, *Get Out* really was the one that got the gifs, but there were a *lot* of them, and they are all good. *Moonlight,* much to our surprise and white tap dancers' chagrin, even won Best Picture at the Academy Awards, after it had forfeited its history-breaking moment to a false attribution of that award to *La La Land,* the type of film which James Baldwin, through the living eyes of Raoul Peck, says shows the depths of perverse fantasy white people are willing to build around themselves to swim and dance in, so as to avoid acknowledging the violence of white supremacy. Even though I hated being a journalist / staff writer, forced to regurgitate a valid or true or even reasonable response to whatever the fuck was happening in the world, especially in the pop cultural world which is more like the "world," now that I am not amongst that mix of people, I find myself yelling at my computer, because everyone is wrong. I'm serious, most people who write articles about film within the timeframe it takes for that article to be deemed "relevant" are not able to take the time to think or feel their way through the meaning of what they experienced. Rather, they are forced to jump on the freight train of whatever thought society already thinks it's having around the association of subjects the film supposedly represents. More on this in a minute.

I love logic. It really gets me. Even as someone who privileges feelings, someone with a Cancer moon, I am not someone who ascribes to the belief that #allfeelingsmatter, or #allfeelingsarevalid. That is both inaccurate, and imprecise. For instance, when a person who can climb stairs feels mad and sad that another person who can climb stairs is calling them out for choosing a venue with stairs to host a dance festival work in progress showing at which some dancers with disabilities, including a dancer who cannot traverse stairs (me!) are performing, these feelings are true for this person, but they are not valid, and yes, they do not matter. They especially do not matter more than the fact that said able-bodied person made a mistake, a mistake that, were it allowed to fully transpire, would result in the segregation and exclusion of certain dancers. These dancers would then be at a disadvantage when it comes time for the larger festival. Their piece, already stigmatized for containing disabled dancers (and people of color for that matter) at all, would be further stigmatized by seeming to come out of nowhere on tech night. This is against the logic of Universal Design, some principles of which were printed along with my interview in this magazine with Sean Gray of Birth (Defects), and include the idea that something is not a truly accessible option if it stigmatizes or segregates the people

accessing it. I ascribe to this principle.

I also ascribe, no, devote myself, to the principles of Disability Justice. There are ten. There are probably more that we could come up with, but ten is good for now. They were first iterated by Sins Invalid, which represents a collective and a shifting wave of voices of disabled people of color and trans and queer disabled people and our comrades and allies, such as Sins Invalid genius co-founder and executive director Patricia Berne, Sins Invalid co-founder, author, police brutality resister, and krip hop radio host Leroy Moore, Sins Invalid performer, environmental justice activist, and poet Aurora Levins Morales, Sins Invalid performer, rad educator, tarot card reader, and poet Leah Lakshmi Piepzna Samarasinha, and even me. My friend and comrade Max Airborne of Oakland is doing this cool thing as a part our shared work with Sins Invalid and their personal Buddhist infused Trump resistance project The Lightning Bolt Project, to explore one principle of disability justice each month over the next ten months. After seeing them post this commitment on facebook, some of us decided to do the same. The first principle is Intersectionality, a word which gets a lot of air time amongst basic trending activists and punks in the "world" but not a whole lot of logical, real world application.

This is what Sins Invalid has to say about Intersectionality: "'We do not live single issue lives.'—Audre Lorde. Ableism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, underscored by heteropatriarchy, has rendered the vast majority of the world 'invalid.'" I've heard a lot of folks going on about how their feminism is intersectional or their politic is intersectional or whatever. But honestly, I feel like if you have to say that, that's like the equivalent of when my white, college President said that he wished he had an unending supply of pebbles in his pocket to help remind him that racism exists. For some of us, intersectionality is not just a neat concept, it's a rather vast descriptor of our basic life experiences as poor / working / hustling class, queer, disabled (mentally or physically or both), trans or gendernonconforming, Native, immigrant, Muslim, Black, Brown, women, femmes, etc. (or any combination of the previous). It is a beautiful thing to name, but it's a vital thing to allow the practice of that knowledge to shape how you respond to your life, respond to others, and yes, how you fucking respond to art.

Two weeks ago in *The Stranger*, there was an article about *Moonlight*'s Oscar win at the back. I was pretty turned off by it. I made the assumption that a nonblack person wrote it, because he used phrases like, "a film so black it was almost not black at all!", and "Moonlight was not set up to be an Oscar winner because it was a black film that was not about blackness." Throughout the tongue in cheek, terse, Guy Debord referencing event review, some good points are made. Like, white Hollywood likes it when black films involve white saviors and or black people yelling and getting whipped some before and after making impassioned speeches. I agreed with all this, and I agreed with some of the reasons Charles Muede (who is in fact Black) posited that *Moonlight*'s win was a surprise. I did not agree that *Moonlight* was a sad story of the missed opportunity for happiness and love for two young gay men. The more precise truth is, it was a movie filled with love, but love doesn't always look a certain way. Being a story which represents multiple moments and intersections of Blackness—being a working class single mother struggling with addiction, being a philosophizing, drug selling, anti-heterosexist father figure, being a young queer / questioning smart kid who doesn't know how exactly to express or grow into his Blackness, doesn't make this any less a film about Blackness, or experiences of racism. As well as experiences of poverty, homophobia, sexism, loneliness, experimentation, growth, and jaw-droppingly quiet, tender love.

I think that the makers of *Moonlight* are privy to these intersections. Is the maker of *Get Out*? My instinct is yes. After all, there are important differences between the scariness of the white sister of the Armitage family and the white brother. It's a different kind of film for sure, a tight, cinchingly edited satirical horror film, but, to my delight and familiar pain, it is extremely tender. Its black characters know the Trauma Queen. The only time the film deviates from my pleasure center (activation: delight and trauma) is when the incidentally blind art dealer who outbids all the other white folks at the auction of the lead character's body, the man who chooses Chris for his personal, high tech, medical minstrelsy. When Chris asks him why black people specifically, (sorry for the vagueness but if you haven't seen it just do it), via home television screen cum futuristic skype, the art dealer claims that he doesn't care about color. "For me it's something deeper, I want your eyes. I want the things you see with." Chris is a talented photographer. White man is an art dealer with a keen aesthetic sense and a degenerative condition which caused him to lose his eyesight. Is it being said that to be white and disabled is to no longer be racist, but to be simply self-centered, the way only white people can? Via the logic of the film, and in keeping, via the logic of white supremacy, black people cannot be physically disabled. They can only be mentally deficient, and physically superior. Of course, the blind white man is still racist, and the director / writer of the film is probably still ableist, but, as evidenced by responses to *Get Out* and *Moonlight*, this kind of nuanced conversation is a century too early. I should just be glad that a Black womxn poet is running for mayor of Seattle, and I am. Because I have feelings.

That's the thing about the logic of intersectional axes of power and disempowerment. You have to use your feelings to access this knowledge. It's an intuitive skill. Folks are definitely born hyperempaths like Lauren Olamina (Parable of the Sower), but if that doesn't happen, you have to fertilize your feelings. Not all of them. Not the ones that make you defensive when you try to take in new information, but the ones that make you tender, and curious. Intersectionality is as much science as it is critical theory. Let it combust your shit.

(In)Accessibility Shout-Out: Half Breed had their return from a two year hiatus last Saturday at Slim's Last Chance in Georgetown. Slim's Last Chance is wheelchair accessible, and I enjoyed the layout, but there is some questionable art. Like how many black employees do you have to have before you can have a Blackface voodoo witch doctor cartoon drawing captioned, "Hep Cat"? I didn't see any black employees so I couldn't ask. Half Breed was a delightful revelation. Swoony lo-fi fuzzy salty gay punk.

One of my favorite sections of *Maximum Rocknroll* has always been Felix Havoc's columns. I've always enjoyed reading his relatively in-depth analyses about punk. His columns always have a refreshingly scholarly tone that is rarely seen when talking about underground or DIY punk. My goal when I got hired to do the metal column for this magazine was to consistently put out content that would be at the same depth as his. There are so many elements of metal that can use a lengthy analysis that it seemed to me like there would be limitless ideas and trends to discuss in this column. However, this month's version of Cowgirls From Heck is not that sort of column. Instead, for the third time in a row now, I have to talk about something personal. After all, there's nothing more heavy than personal shit.

COLUMNS

COLUMNS

This is a warning: this column talks about suicide and drug usage.

I have spent most of this month grieving the loss of an old friend of mine, Joey Tran. I will not go into the specific details that surround their death, but their suicide shook me to the core. Unfortunately, it wasn't surprising to me, and despite their personal strength, it could not have been prevented. Joey was neurodiverse, and like so many other radical people, had an utter disdain for the pharmaceutical care. I found that out the hard way during a conversation with them. After hearing them discuss their suicidal ideations for a while, I asked them if they had considered talking to a therapist before. That comment alone made them profoundly upset. After calming down, they explained to me their history with psychiatrists and told me about their terrifying experience with psychiatric medication. They said that the drugs they took with their doctor had drastically changed aspects of their personality, and they were so scared of taking these medications again that they decided to self-medicate with other drugs instead. You could often track how they were doing solely by what they were using. During some of their most stable times in life, they were straightedge, but even these times were marked by bouts of depression and despondency that were absolutely horrifying.

Joey challenged and changed so much about the way that I viewed the world, often for the better. In particular, there were two things that they strongly affected: my views towards addiction and my ideas about gender. Joey was one of my first close friends in my life to struggle with addiction. When we became friends, I had just quit drinking altogether. They, on the other hand, were drinking almost constantly. I found their drinking to sometimes be insufferable, and I made it a point to tell them that. But my annoyance changed somewhat when they told me why they needed to do so. They drank, they told me, in order to sleep. If they didn't drink, they would experience terrifying audio hallucinations that would keep them up all night. Over the time that we were friends, I helped them quit drinking altogether, during which time they found other ways to cope with their hallucinations when they appeared. But at some point, things got bad with them. The warehouse that they were squatting in got sold off, they lost their job, their band broke up, and some of their close friends (including me) were not being close with them anymore. To them, their world was collapsing, so they started using harder drugs again.

When I found out, it was by accident. I was helping my friends move when they got a call from Joey's future partner. They had overdosed that night. Fortunately, they survived, but that night I was deeply upset. I was furious and scared and confused. How could they? They had not used hard drugs in years, and they seemed at the time to be much healthier than they had been. So I had one of the worst reactions possible to their overdose. At first, it immediately made me want to push Joey away. I did not want to be around any users. I foolishly thought that they were perhaps going to negate a lot of the positive mental health work that they had done since we began our friendship. I wasn't sure how we would be able to be friends. It wasn't until I talked to our mutual friend Rosie and to Joey that I learned that addicts often relapse, and that they often do so due to inner turmoil. If anything, to totally disconnect from addicts can sometimes worsen the addiction. Still, I knew that at that moment, I was not emotionally in the right place to rekindle that friendship. But after I spent some time researching and talking to people about addiction, (and after several apologies on my part for my shittiness) Joey and I later became close friends again.

As I mentioned above, Joey challenged the way I thought about gender for the better as well. Before we had become friends, I had met a lot of binary and non-binary trans people, but before Joey, I did not have a close friend to talk to about gender things. They were assigned female at birth, but they told me that they had never truly felt that they were a woman. They did not feel like a man either, and at some point they knew that they needed to come out as genderqueer. At the time, I had not yet come out to myself yet, but so many of the things they talked about resonated deeply with me and put me down a road of re-evaluating the way I related to my body and my being. I would venture so far as to say that it would have taken me even longer to come out had I not been close with Joey. Much of the processing they were going through about gender and coming out I later went through myself. I watched and listened and learned as they came out to other people, and did my best to be supportive of the. When I came out to them later on, I thanked them for being open with me as they were processing their feelings about gender.

This openness that Joey had is one that I wish other people would have. I do not feel qualified in any way to make any comments or recommendations about mental health issues, and I shall not do so here. I do not know what is best for each and every person's mental health. But it is of the utmost importance that neurotypical people be open and accepting of people with mental illness and who struggle with addiction. What Joey taught me is that we must be sympathetic to others, and to try to come to each other from a position of understanding. It is hard to do this sometimes. I fail at it, and you probably will fail at it at points in your life. But if we don't try to do come to each other from a place of understanding and empathy, then the world cannot become a better place. How can we be radicals if we don't support each other? And please, if you are despondent and need someone to talk to, consider calling the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

This month's Cowgirls From Heck, and every one after, goes out to Joey Tran, a true Cowdude from Heck. Rest in peace.

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When I could, I helped myself work through grief by listening to a lot of music. Here's some of the new releases I was into this month:

POWER TRIP – *Nightmare Logic* LP (Southern Lord): POWER TRIP is among the biggest names in modern thrash and their sophomore album, *Nightmare Logic*, should cement them in place as *the* best one. But don't get fooled by the modern thrash tag—this is no pizza / party thrash group. So put down your skateboards, and take off your flip cap SUICIDAL TENDENCIES hat; this one is serious. POWER TRIP summons up the spirit of real deal old school thrash like VIO-LENCE and NUCLEAR ASSAULT and adds a dash of the crossover sound of *Best Wishes*-era CRO-MAGS. What's surprising is that POWER TRIPS writes riffs that are just as good as the best of any of those bands. Seriously, there's not a weak track on this album. So far I still prefer their debut *Manifest Decimation*, but this is a damn strong album. I won't be surprised if this shows up on people's lists of the best releases of 2017.

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CANCELLED – *Tenebrific* EP (self-released): This is a strange one. CANCELLED is the project of Marc Bourgon from grindcore greats FUCK THE FACTS, but you should not expect a single hurried note on this project. Instead, there's tons of synthesizer and distorted basslines backed by languid drums. It's an interesting exploration of a doom / dream pop territory that JESU explored in the past, albeit with much harsher vocals. The three songs on *Tenebrific* are all tense, sludgy mood pieces. Don't come to this expecting any killer riffs, but if you like exploring the sort of territory shared by KOWLOON WALLED CITY or HARVEY MILK's album *A Small Turn Of Human Kindness*, this is up your alley.

***

TOMB MOLD – *Primordial Malignity* LP (Blood Harvest): It feels like just yesterday that I was pushing TOMB MOLD on everybody, and here I am doing it again with their debut full-length. I'm not sure how this duo manages to crank out these songs at the

pace they do (their last demo was recorded in September!), but I am thankful that they can do so. This record is full of incredible old school death metal riffing that is technical without sounding like some shitty tech-death album. This album has enough variation to satisfy any death metal fan: the crusty attack of ENTOMBED, the guttural, doomy stylings of AUTOPSY, and the creepy riffs of Finn death greats like ABHORRENCE. I hope TOMB MOLD keeps up the pace that they've been going at, because I certainly am hungering for more.

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INFERNAL BODY – *Barren Land* CS (self-released): INFERNAL BODY play a really punkish form of black metal on this tape that swerves between an energetic midtempo stomp, your typical tremolo picking with blastbeats, and a slower, almost droney mood. There are times when these songs feel like they drag on for too long, but when everything is in the right place, this feels like a lost BONE AWL demo. Personally, I'd prefer it if this band stuck to the more stompy sounding material. If this were released in '89, this would probably be a pretty highly regarded cult demo, but this is 2017…

Please send me your band's demos! Especially if your band includes LGBTQI+ people or POC. Mail Bradley at deathpoemrecs@gmail.com

"No Shame, just pride!
We are Skinheads and these are our times!
So what does this all mean for today?
You've grown up now
But have you changed your ways?
Have you become a sheep and followed the crowd?
Or are you still a Skinhead, are you still proud?
No shame, just pride!
We are Skinheads and this is our life!"
—Loyalty, "No Shame, Just Pride"

Weew Keep Deh Fafe!

Break out the crystals and the ENYA tapes punks, cuz spring has sproinged. Yinz better start crafting! Those short-shorts and deep armhole punk-tanks aren't going to create themselves (unless you fuck with *Enfants Riches Déprimés*—and if you do hit me up cuz I'm down to party.) Also punks, don't let common decency and social norms (or your mom's nagging) pressure you into using deodorant this season. 2017 is the year of the multi-tasking protest. While you're out chaining yourselves to Amazon-drones in the name of socio-eco-anti-specieism you can let the world know that you also refuse the perfumed, aluminum-laced shackles of Capitalism. (Whose stink? Our stink!)

If you need guidance on multi-tasking I'd recommend asking Comrade Mr. Lefty Hooligan. That guy dusts his book collection (every one of 'em from AK Press), pops a couple Werther's Originals, tears down a Randian-Stirnerist (tougher than a Tarrasque) with a scathing *MRR* column and then rides the bus (gotta support public transpo!) out to Oakland International to engages in some light self-flagellation by zipping over to Red Square to clean the glass on Lenin's Tomb ("Nothing to lose but your smudges!"). And all before his 2:00 p.m. nap! Whew!

As for skinheads preparing for the heat, all we gotta do is pack away the Alpha until next fall and bring out the camo shorts (classy as a Kool-Aid mustache). But let's stop the goofery and get at the deal. Time to get serious! Die hards! Sharpen your teeth and shine yer boots! Scum! Tie yer shoes cuz yer on the run! Oi! Oi! power is on the attack once again.

***

CLOSE COMBAT – *Spiet Vaan Niks* CD (Spirit of the Streets): CLOSE COMBAT was part of the initial Dutch wave of Oi! bands to gain recognition outside of the Netherlands back in the early 2000's. Their first two records, *Viva Mestreech!* and *Guest of the State*—'04 and '06, respectively—are solid if not mind-blowing records of Dutch Oi! Meaning that it's gruff and tuff Oi! with big choruses that connect the dots between the UK and Deutsch sounds. A note of interest is the band's use of the Maastrichtian dialect, a variation of Limburgish that is only spoken in their home of Maastricht. Ethnomusicologists take note! With *Spiet Vaan Niks*, CLOSE COMBAT ditch the pure Oi! mold for mediocre forays into metal and Viking-rock. Oi! is still the canvas they chose to paint on, but the middling approach to change marks the effort as a diminished product. (For those in Rio Linda, that means "not good.") Maybe it's on account of all the ULTIMA THULE (cue, "Nothing Compares 2 U") we've been blasting but when I hear songs like "Kom Met Us" (with an intro that sounds remarkably like that PAPA ROACH song "Last Resort") I want to toss the whole shebang into the toilet (where turds go). Two of the songs contain an overly dramatic addition of a children's choir. Never OK unless you're JAY-Z (and even then it's cheap).

***

LES PARTISANS – *Le Sourire Aux Lèvres* EP (Casual / Solitude Urbaine): Two new songs from the prolific red and black soul / ska / skinhead outfit LES PARTISANS. I don't care what they're singing about (don't wanna know) but the two sides of this record are built to get your feet moving. "A Jamais" takes you on a late-night soul / funk stroll with a gritty edge. Flip the record and you get "Rouge Baiser" a sunny Rocksteady tune with some bouncy horns and a nice...clarinet? Bien! Marx was wrong, but this record is right!

***

LOS FASTIDIOS – *The Sound Of Revolution* CD (KOB): Music for the echo chamber. If you are excited about this record chances are you're already on board with the FASTIDIOS's message of general dancing in the street revolution. If you're new to the world of red and anarchist ska / punk / Oi!—not so much Oi! anymore—this band is a fine place to start. Lots of Hammond organ on this piece. And it sounds like the bass player is probably doing the limbo while he plays. Everything's irie. Or something. They cover "Clandestino" by MANU CHAO. If you're bummed about Mein Trumpf and still like ska punk (or songs about scooters – blorf!) this record will speak to you—in the broadest sense.

***

SAINTS & SINNERS – *Breakaway* CD (KB): Melodic and well-written Oi! from the fun and freaky home of Kafka—Prague! When Oi! goes pop it can lead down a slippy slope into the quagmire of beard and Mohawk style streetpunk. On *Breakaway* SAINTS & SINNERS do a fine job of side stepping the beardo whoa-oh bro-pit fart cloud that wafts around many modern bands of the genre and finds firm footing with the likes of COCK SPARRER, ON THE JOB, and UNITED WE STAND. A pensive mood pervades the album that adds gravitas and weight to songs that might otherwise be conventional and cliché. Read these true tales from "The Places I Used to Know": *"Walking thru the city around the places I used to know / What the hell? / Were is the bar where I got drunk for the first time? / No kids on the street any more, just businessmen all around / On every corner/ Big Brother's watching me! / I feel like a stranger in a place where I grew up / I'm like a ghost from the past from our glory days!"* Great new album!

***

SWEET FUCK ALL – *Mission Accomplished* LP (Longshot Music / Rebellion): These Philly boot boys gotta be charged with some disorderly conduct! Damn! The evil has landed and its new name

COLUMNS

is SWEET FUCK ALL! Let us begin with some killer lyrics, yes? From *"Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Antifa": "Who's the sorry sod / Who actually believed / It was us versus them / When you know it's you versus me / You wanna know what I think of your damn opinion? / I'm Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Anti-Antifascist / There you go again / You draw that dumb ass line / I'll show you where I stand / I hope you understand / I'm an antifascist rocking against communism!"* Lest sensitive punks stage a march on our Wilkinsburg HQ, SWEET FUCK ALL ain't no chauvinist louts. The second song, "American Skinhead Pride" lets us know where they stand on tolerance, *"Pride in our culture, respect all others / I know I wouldn't be / An American skin without understanding / The melting pot we're in!"* *Mission Accomplished* contains twelve songs of binge drinking, US of A loving, religion hating, society damning, allegorical history spouting, antisocial American Skinhead Rock. We've been looking forward to this release since we heard their demo back in 2015 and it's been well worth the wait. Total win.

***

THUNDER AND GLORY – *Living in the Crossfire* 10" (Contra / Longshot Music): First things first, the cover art on this records needs to be saluted! It depicts a four-armed skinhead wielding, a Samurai sword, a bat, a giant hammer and a beer stein battling against a giant viper under thundering clouds. Stupid and awesome. Other than the inconvenient format I don't have anything bad to say about this. Most (all?) of the dudes in this band were in the BOILS. THUNDER AND GLORY also contains current and ex-members of DUFFY'S CUT, LEGION 76, SWEET FUCK ALL and the CUFFS. The pedigree is strong but *Living in the Crossfire* doesn't necessarily sound like any of those bands. This is epic rocking Oi! with some serious JUDAS PRIEST meets AC/DC guitar swagger and reminds us of MIDGÅRD SÖNER's style of Viking-Oi! To boot (Oi!) there's a song called "Viking Revolution." This is a battle record (Oi!) with the five of six songs dealing with victory over unnamed foes (Oi!). The lone song not dealing with combat of one form or another is "The Departed," an elegy for old friends who have gone on to Bigger and Better Things. We're glad to see an American band succeeding with this style. *"Beat the drums of war / The battle awaits you! / Oi!"* Yes, Oi!

***

That'll wrap things up this month! Stay shaved!

ENDNOTES:

1) Send New York Fashion Week invites to AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

2) If I gave every record a positive review (lookin' at you American-Oi.com) what would that say about my tastes? It'd say I'm either some homer who actually doesn't know good Oi! from bad or that I'm too nervous to state my opinion in case it upsets the tender feelings of adults, or maybe that I work for one of the big Oi! Houses and don't want to risk my job / scene-stature / free records (again, lookin' at you American-Oi.com). Well, lucky for y'all my taste is impeccable and no one reads *MRR* anyways so no feelings are ever hurt! It should also be noted I purchase just about every record I review—even the ones I pan! We do accept free records though (one copy only please).
3) And shirts (XL).

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

A PARTIAL LIST OF TRANS WOMEN I'VE KNOWN

I'm a social worker and a therapist. In my normal life, I spend a lot more time facilitating therapy groups with people who are getting sober or struggling with wanting to die than I do on whatever counts as punk now. (Delay pedals?) It's not the sunshine-iest work; people relapse, people overdose, and sometimes people die. But I'm stoked to do it because I have this fundamental core belief, which is reflected in the work of twentieth century psychologists and punk heroes Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, that people are like plants in that as long as we're alive the impulse to grow and heal never really goes away. We can suppress it. Obstacles can get in the way and slow or temporarily stop that growth and healing, and sometimes it feels like all we can do is lie here and rot, but that spark is ever truly gone. That's what life *is*.

Sometimes at my job I get to help people remember this when they've forgotten it.

I bring this up because around the end of the nineties or the beginning of the oughties I found myself pretty caught up in writing secret gender change porn on the internet and when I look back it's clear to me that this was a manifestation of that impulse toward growth and healing. I mean, there was a lot of guilt and shame and secrecy and depression and never sleeping and anorexia and stuff attached to it, but that was mostly because I'm trans, had always been trans, and had managed to convince myself (with help from just about everyone in the world and the entire weight of American culture) that I wasn't. Writing porn about boys who are made to become girls was a tool for starting to work through all that stuff I'd internalized. It was a very, very indirect way in to addressing stuff I could not figure out how else to address.

If you look at it in a certain light, it's actually kind of brilliant.

Writing "tg erotica" very quickly led to writing a blog about why writing "tg erotica" didn't feel like it was scratching the itch it was supposed to scratch, which led to interacting with actual real live trans people online, which led to meeting my friend D in person one night after seeing a dumb indie rock band in Philadelphia, going back to her house, and staying up all night talking to a real live trans person about being a real live trans person in real life for the first time, which led to an IRL friendship. She does computer things. She has done a number of witchcrafts to my computer.

She was one of the people who held my hand as I came out offline. She brought me to my first Trans Health Conference in Philly, which was one of my most important young adult formative experiences.

At that first Trans Health Conference, I met A, who was co-facilitating a workshop on The Trans Punk Perspective which I've probably written about before. Basically it was a fiasco and it was one of the most important moments in my life and then A and I became friends. I stayed with her every summer for a while when I was doing Girls Rock Camp. She's into MMORPGs and Jeff Rosenstock and old reggae. She's got tattoos all over her hands and forearms and shoulders. Some of them are anime tattoos.

I met P when I was organizing with Camp Trans in the mid oughties. We met because we both responded to the same craigslist ride from New York out to Michigan. When I lived in New York she was one of the only people who would watch shitty horror movies with me. She also toured as a roadie with like the Cro-Mags or something. It probably wasn't the Cro-Mags. But she was always punker than me.

I met R at Camp Trans too, although it was the year after I met P. I was the music coordinator and I invited her to perform. She'd go on to feel pretty embarrassed by that music project and never liked it when I talked about it. She got Youtube famous for a while, published some writing, toured the US a bunch of times doing stand up comedy, then went on to work in a bookstore and write tweets that occasionally go viral. She was in a pretty monstrous bike wreck a few months ago.

I actually don't remember when I met K.

Livejournal? Unclear. What I can tell you is that she's one of my favorite singers. She can get her voice to shred and stay shredded in a way that's pretty rare, but she keeps being in bands that break up before they record second albums. She's also a killer bass player, started a record label that put out three comps of feminist punk from her region, and cofounded a Girls Rock Camp. She and A have been a couple for like six years.

I also really don't remember where I met A—a different A, which stands in her for the same thing as it does for that first A. They are different people. This A plays in a bunch of bands and is one of those people who understand how music works and can tell you what time signature a song is in. I think the first time we really hung out was in her attic where me and her and N played a bunch of bass-keys-drums black metal or noise metal or hardcore or whatever.

I first got in touch with N to ask if she wanted to play music because I'd heard her bedroom black metal project and I wanted to play with a trans woman who could play drums really fast. At the time I was kind of a dick—I think I was like "I don't like your normal band but I want to start a new band with you," but she was really nice and agreed to play music and stuff. I like her normal band now though; I was just being a dumb idiot because at the time I only wanted to listen to like blackened crust stuff. I saw N's main band (which A, the A from the previous paragraph, plays in) soon after I got to LA last year when I was feeling super alienated and lonely, and it was really good for me. N's also an incredible visual and tattoo artist who gets thousands and thousands of likes whenever she posts anything to instagram.

WHY I'M TELLING YOU THIS

I'm telling this because these are all people I've known for years who I had over to my house a week ago who I love and miss and never get to see and when is the last time you heard a story about trans women being in community with each other where nobody died?.

I'm telling you this because when is the last time you heard a story with trans women in it where they've been in love for six years or for a fucking decade? When's the last time you heard a story where a trans woman and her partner were about to have a kid? That's why everybody was at my house. For a baby shower. Well, sort of a baby shower. Most everybody is broke so we asked anybody to bring was themselves and maybe a book they loved as a kid, if they felt like they needed to bring a present.

I'm telling you this because I'm tough and punk and cool which keeps me distant from wimpy hippie emotions like gratitude. Plus, trauma responses like dissociation add an extra layer of defense from feelings. But over the course of the last weekend I just kept having these moments where I felt so stoked and lucky that my life, at this point, is like this. I think I actually had feelings about it. Like: human emotions.

I'm telling you this because an enormous part of the reason I let all those blocks and barriers to growth and healing fall into place—the ones I had to find creative ways around, such as writing niche pornography and then blogging about it—is that this is not a story I ever hear.

That trans women have lives.

I mean, look. Not every trans woman has a life that looks like mine. I've been pretty broke and had to scrape by sometimes, but the story of my life is about white privilege and class privilege (laaa la la la la laaa). I've had the support of a cis partner, her family, and I built a pretty large social and support network when I was younger, dirtier, and given a lot of leeway by the police and randos on the street because I was young white and thin—remember about the anorexia?—even after I started getting read as trans. You know?

So I don't want to paint myself as some kinda hero of the oppressed. I'm a fuckin white lady who lives in a house, is about to have a kid, and can afford to live on the paycheck she gets every couple weeks. But beyond my own personal solipsistic life and *MRR* column, I'm telling you because I want you to know that there are a lot of different ways that a lot of different trans people thrive and exist in community and support each other and look out for each other and have lives that are at least as real and complex and emotionally deep and full of love as the lives of anybody else.

What I want you to know is that when we're talking about people being like plants—growing out of cracks in the sidewalk and through fences and in basements that get half an hour of sunlight a day—we're not usually including trans people. We generally don't think of trans people when we're thinking of people in general; ask me at fucking thirteen, trying to figure out how to exist without killing myself, trying to figure out a future that I could live in. That plan? To turn the part of me that needed to transition as a kink that I would never tell anyone about until I died alone, which evolved into secret internet niche pornography writing? That was a tendrils curling around the frame of a broken down car, sprouts shooting up in the shadow or a fallen tree moment, too. I mean: not doing anything wasn't working. So I did something.

If people are like plants, trans people are basically a bunch of fucking weeds. You can't get rid of us. There's a lot of us. You can kill some of us, but you'll never kill all of us. And if we live long enough, we can grow up to become fucking trees.

And let's be real. Weed and trees rule.

I attended a show in a university town where bands played in an old castle. Among all the great bands Önkiirtás played a heavy hitting set but the main events were Rákosi, a band no one knows, who were released by Lengua Armada Discos and from the beginning until now they have been on the top of their game. They played a set that only contained their newly recorded songs without vocals, due to health issues of their vocalist. The crowd had hystericized themselves into psychosis, even to these unknown tunes without the always important vocals. Rákosi left a microphone open to the crowd and some self-confident attendee grabbed the chance to yell their frustration into the microphone, which was a more awkward than uplifting happening to witness. The rest of the room just danced due to their private temperament, while I was in the back, amazed by the new riff-centric direction Rákosi is moving their sound. Their cynical statement is: we want to open up for the stupidest metal fans as well, but their witty yet simple riffs are far away from Jud Jud escapism.

The other top band was Gypsy SS, who initially formed to record a demo and vanish but since they loved their own output they stayed together and started playing a limited amount of shows. Sounds a bit mysterious guy, although their sound is actually between vicious hardcore and classic Hungarian punk, with a little added psychedelia. The weekend crowd with a large percentage of totally random people reacted great, they were tossing their bodies in trance which reminded me of early VHK videos. When reality is harsh as it is now, people mostly just want to dance to brutal sounds to forget totalitarianism.

One of the important sentences I read regarding the correlation between the current president of the United States and radical music is that putting the two in too close relation and raising it to a global level would ignore a world full of dissonant bands. It also ignores the fact that the world as a whole is

majorly fucked. Maybe secondary and third to world politics states are not laid on nuclear bombs but that does not even hurt, you just vanish. While living in fear, oppression, restricted and strained for a life is maybe a more terrorizing experience then burnt alive by plutonium a fracture of a second.

This is the noise leaking into music.

One of the academic samples of an environment crawling into music is Billy Bao's *Buildings From Bilbao*, which sounds like if you were listening to a music while travelling all around a huge city, through several neighborhoods via various versions of the public transportation system. That record confronts the borders of reality—what happens when you listen to it on a busy street with headphones that aren't soundproof? Isn't it cheating on the integrity of sounds to listen to Disclose records through high-fi, expensive headphones or would it be a mutation and not an upgrade of a sound when I let the rattling metro cars emphasize the background noise of this record while I travel to my parents' flat on weekly visits. If this could sound great, the sonic synthesization of local bad economy puts power into music.

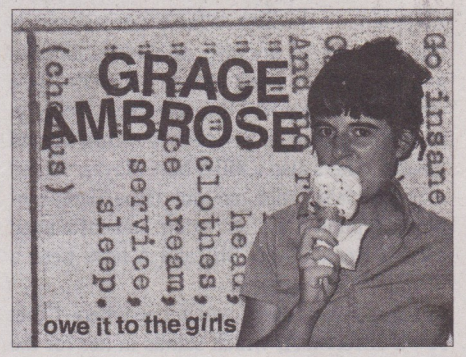
Hez from Panama put out a violent, weird record with so many straightforward riffs entangled into each other. They do not complicate the linearity of the music but they multiply it to a level where it gets confusing enough to become explosive. This chance of explosion is transformed into a bestiality of a pack of wolves circling around their bounty. The icon of wolf pack is also reflected in their catchy riffs, influenced by the sheer aggression of early American hardcore but broadcasted through a filthy channel. It is much more direct, focusing more on making noise, not only being clumsy with their fre instruments, it sounds dangerous dangerous because it is infused with whatever is happening around them.

A less recent great record I have stumbled on is the self-titled 7" of Italy's Fogna. They play raw punk with drum machine but without the guitars being raw; instead they sound like channeled from a hectic post-punk *New Age*-Blitz new wave record. This makes their record a mess, but an entertaining one since it deconstructs our expectations and places sonically foreign sounds to each other, turning Discharge into an amphetamine party. The breakneck speed is raging and the guitars are filthy, but the slime here reeks from patchouli and not of squat dirt. Declino had similar sounds but their song structures were more fragile and less direct, to the point of destruction.

Reptoides from Mexico keep releasing distorted echo chamber rock'n'roll with nasty vocals from the gutter. Their huge and ugly sound is overpowering, at this larger than life volume they could play anything, in any way. They are not the tightest but rather the most enthusiastic band with more interest in sci-fi ideas than focus on keeping the pace. The rock'n'roll sharpness could place them into a basement party where PCP is mixed into drinking water—does it work then?—the laser gun effect on whichever instrument is best when they start to play a mutant riff. On their most recent 7", which is not even out yet, they ordered the vocals backwards and left all the spotlight for the guitars. It takes away most of the weirdness I mentioned before, though this does not make them any worse only different. Their drums still mimic nail hammering into metal surface, their aftertaste is still pure venom.

On a recent obssessive trip that forced me to listen to hyper fast bands from Germany and the Netherlands, I encountered Genossen who operate at a high pace executed with manic precision on their tape *Wehrt Euch*. The entertainment here lays between the speed and their actual songs which in most cases sound more like post-punk than hardcore. At least they have the melodies which are even better when performed in a dumb rhythm rather than hardcore speed. "Amis Raus," with its tape manipulation tempo and fragmented guitar is one of the best tracks on this tape, even the lead melody is less generic. They are an interesting addition to the early German scene, but they foreshadow chemically pure fast and melodic music that was the bane of the upcoming decade.

In honor of *MRR* having a metal column again, I will write briefly about A.T.Det from Japan who master the metal punk, drunk weirdness of which Zouo is god. A.T.Det is less freaky and their power is within their songs not in the satanic, nightmarish surroundings. They shred with the right amount of aggression. I have no idea what makes them enjoyable for me since I only like metal when it's as surreally dumb as Metal Virgins' *Animal People*, a record that was recorded so sloppily and probably drunk that British metalheads happened to sound like GISM in their full glory. A.T.Det's metal even with the punk rawness is a tight powerhouse, making me think that maybe I can appreciate other subcultures without irony or finding a common feature. The power of oppressed and neglected is shining through their hammering stops and up to the top riffs. If I were drinking beer instead of white tea right now, and if I were as drum as Metal Virgins, I would bang my fist into the air to this. But now I have to listen to something that is falling apart and turns its world upside down to be able to perform its dissonant beautiful song.



I've hardly had time to write a column these last few months—I've been traveling and slowly chipping away at some big projects at the mag. We've basically bagged every single LP at the compound (if you've ever been here and tried to listen to a record you know what a feat this is! Shivaun has changed everyone's life for the better!) and we're well into the databasing project (though still looking for some more volunteers who are able to come over and do inventory!). There should be some exciting archive related news in July—keep your eyes peeled. We're also working on a long-overdue new website (thank you Bryony and Oli!), which will bring our online presence into the 21st century. It's a great time to be at *MRR* and if you want to dive in and live the chaos, we're looking for a new content coordinator to move out here and join me. Direct inquiries to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Now for a little housekeeping:

1) Yes, the rumors are true. The Last Punk is PissPigGranddad. Don't understand what that means? Maybe you're lucky. Lots of people have written to me wondering why we haven't been writing about Brace's exploits overseas in the magazine. "Why did *Rolling Stone* get the scoop?" Just because Brace doesn't believe in security culture doesn't mean the rest of us are ready to throw it all out the window. We're in correspondence with him almost every day—here's hoping he gets home safe soon.

2) I have a few copies of the Warm Bodies debut EP (reviewed later on in this issue!) left. thrillingliving.com to get it, thrillingliving@gmail.com if you wanna wholesale, interesting trades considered! (*Interesting.*) Up next for the label: gSp 12" (Marissa Magic, Layla Gibbon, Tobi Vail supergroup! Like Y-Pants playing Flipper or vice-versa!); Anti-Sex LP (debut on vinyl for this DF-based group, who will tour the west coast with Riña and Blank Spell this summer); and EPs from SBSM, Scrap Brain, and Xylitol.

3) By the time you read this, my band Mozart will have released our EP on Iron Lung Records. My first time on vinyl and I'm really proud of it. The sound of total freedom. Not for everyone, but maybe for you?

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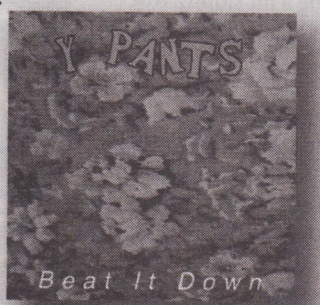

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Introduction by Julia Booz. Interview by Julia Booz and Matt Badenhop. Photos by Martin Sorrondeguy.

Mülltüte is a two-piece punk band from Berlin. I first saw them in Oakland at LoBot Gallery, on their second US West Coast tour. I was struck by the singer / guitar player Marc's urgent playing and how wide his mouth opened when he was screaming the lyrics. The dynamic between him and the drummer, Arndt, was frantic and present. I felt I was watching them having a fight where they were agreeing. I definitely wanted to find out more about what they were all about. Matt and I went to Berlin in October 2016 for a week and conducted this interview after watching them play a practice set at their space in Kreuzberg, around the corner from Static Shock Records.

MRR: How come there's only two people in this band?
Marc: Mülltüte started in 2010, maybe four or six weeks before we were both going to the US West Coast at the same time to visit friends in Portland. Arndt had the idea to start a band and play a show there to do some cultural exchange. We asked our travelling companion if she wanted to play bass but she said no, so we ended up as a two-piece.

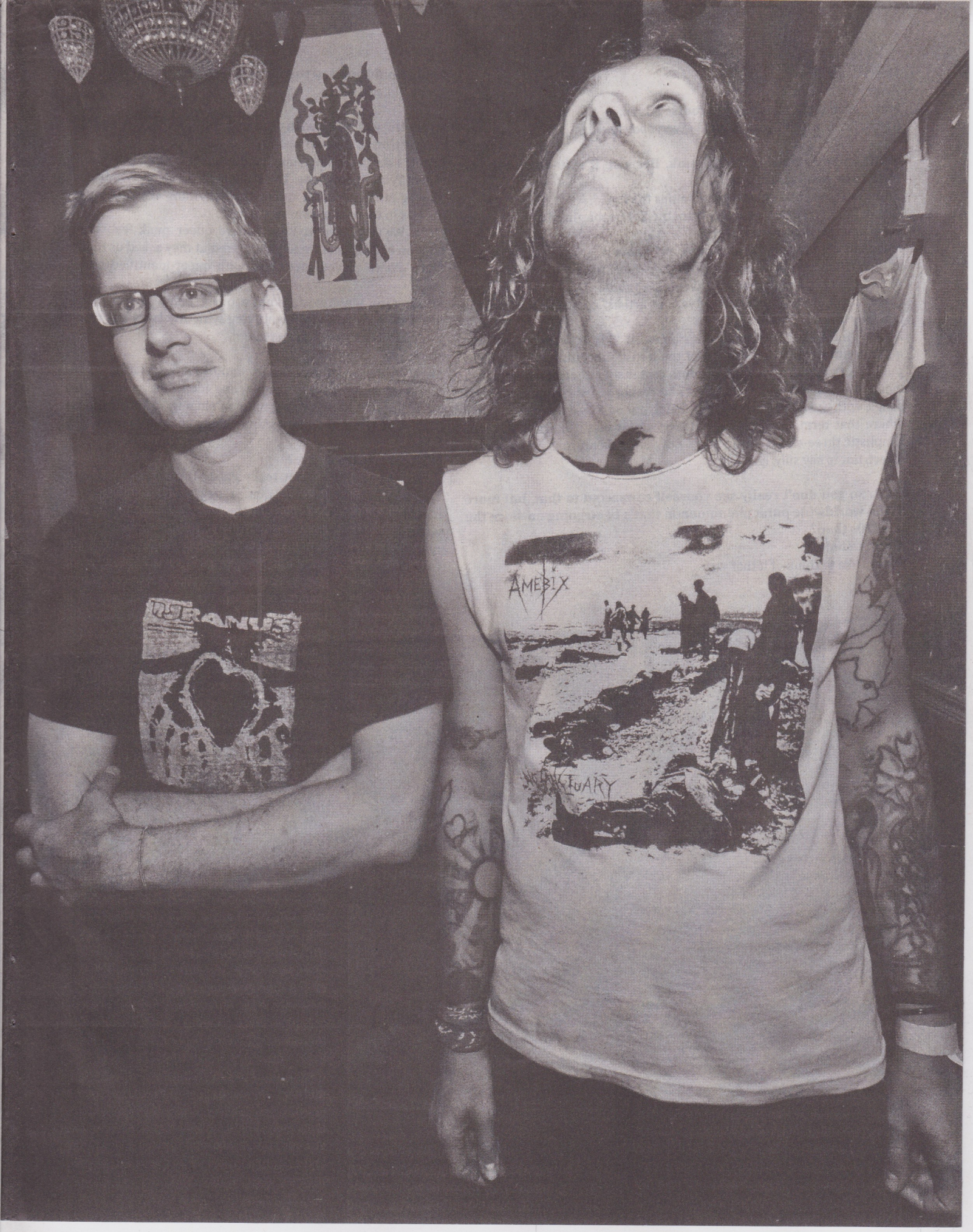
MRR: Your first show ever was in Portland, correct?
Marc: Yes, with Social Graces. Our second show was in Oakland at Hazmat warehouse. After we got back to Germany, we decided to keep playing. We thought of adding a bass player many times...
Arndt: Still do, occasionally...

MRR: Had you ever played together before?
Arndt: We were in a four-piece band before that was kind of maybe reaching its end at that point. In that band we got along particularly well, and this traveling plan came up and with our similar sense of humor, "Oh, let's bring a stupid Deutschpunk band—not even Deutschpunk, let's form a really silly band where we both play instruments that we can't actually play that well." Because we are both bass players at heart, I think.

MRR: How do you center yourselves in the Deutschpunk timeline?
Both: [*laughter]*
Arndt: We're definitely on another timeline. We're not on the Deutschpunk timeline at all.
Marc: When people talk about Mülltüte they usually mention Deutschpunk. Maybe the first half-year it was a homage to Deutschpunk.
Arndt: Actually, only the first two songs kind of were.
Marc: I think after the first few songs, it was more internationally-influenced. I couldn't even tell what kind of influence it was. Maybe it's from the '80s wave of European hardcore explosion where bands were still raw but a bit melodic and had some hooks, and that could be all over the place. I think with Mülltüte I always had in mind a band that was somehow intense and had hooks, and is not very perfect, maybe a bit sloppy. Not at all like pro musicians playing in a hardcore band. Also, we do sing in German

MRR: Which maybe for me, the American, is like "Oh, it's Deutschpunk. You're not singing in English so..." But what really is Deutschpunk? People might have different conceptions about what it is. What is Deutschpunk coming from a German's perspective?
Arndt: You have to differentiate between—I don't know if there is a textbook definition, or if anyone ever wrote their master thesis in musicology on Deutschpunk. It's different to punk with lyrics in German. To me, Deutschpunk is some really simplistic three-chord punk, mid-tempo, 2-4 beat, simple lyrics, and kinda silly—or actually can be political, but really direct...I can't really explain it...not quite Oi! and for some reason really provincial sounding. When I think of Deutschpunk I think of three to four men with floppy mohawks from a village or a small town getting drunk in a shed behind their house and playing *uffta uffta*-kind of music and having a good time doing so.
Marc: But not so many mohawks in one band. I think the typical lineup would be one guy with a mohawk, one guy with a mullet, maybe one metal guy...
Arndt: That's not Deutschpunk, that's crossover.
Marc: No, there's always one metal guy in the band, and maybe one skin.

MRR: Let's talk bands, like which bands would be the quintessential Deutschpunk bands that Germans would consider to be Deutschpunk?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Marc: Canal Terror...
Arndt: Daily Terror.
Marc: Yeah Daily Terror, and of course Slime...
Arndt: Slime is not Deutschpunk! *[Everybody laughs]*

MRR: So you're post-Deutschpunk. Because it's 20-whatever you have to be post-*something.*
Both: Yeah, maybe...Deutschpunk minus the fun.
Arndt: We're trying to get away from the 2-4 beat as hard as we can but we always get drawn back to it.
Marc: In my opinion, Deutschpunk as I know it, growing up with that stuff as a fourteen-year-old kid, with the *Schlachtrufe BRD Sampler*...
Arndt: *Deutschpunk Kampflieder* would be another...
Marc: ...and there were all these "various artists" compilations from the late '80s or early '90s.
Arndt: I think after the punk explosion in the '80s in Germany that was quite political, kind of a lineage of the leftist subculture, after hippies punks were taking over, and the youth center squats, etcetera, it just got made into a brand in the early '90s and resold as Deutschpunk fighting songs, with the most famous songs being put on CDs. I don't even know where that term comes from, but basically it just translates to really simplistic three-chord music that's not very adventurous and has very direct, not to say silly, lyrics.

MRR: So you don't really see yourself connected to that, but more of the worldwide punk phenomenon that's been going on since the late '70s then?
Arndt: Definitely.
Marc: I like to think of it that way.

MRR: Would you say you identify as a queer band?
Arndt: No, not really...

MRR: Do you play with queer bands or have a specific connection to a queer scene?
Arndt: I don't consider our band a queer band, even though I identify as queer / gay. The band is more about two friends playing music together rather than anything else. The queer thing is in there somewhere, though.
Marc: We've played at Bent Fest (a queer punk festival) in London in 2015 and we felt honored that they asked us to play there. We've played some gigs with queer-identified bands, too...
Arndt: Also, we arevisibly not a queer band. [Marc] I don't mean to force you into identifying with any label but would you identify as straight / hetero?
Marc: Yes, I would.
Arndt: Thanks. I think this is important in relation to the question. So, we're two people, one identifies as queer, the other doesn't. Marc's doing most of singing, even though we both write lyrics and there's some queer content in there.

MRR: Oh, really, where?
Arndt: It's subtle. It's not really Pansy Division-type of stuff. The way we play music that is aggressive, noisy, shouty hardcore punk doesn't really fit the "queercore"-aesthetic that was maybe established in the early to mid-'90s. Also, one of the reasons we were invited to Bent Fest was that we're friends with the people that put it on.

MRR: There's something to that, though. It's not a coincidence that you are writing about things that are relevant to it and also are friends with these people.
Arndt: Yeah, even though we know the people that put on the fest, I was really excited that they specifically invited Mülltüte to play at a thing that is very near and dear to my heart. Maybe we seemed nice enough as people. Also, our band is only two white cis-men instead of four.

MRR: Fewer opportunities for anyone to be a fucker?!
Arndt: Yeah, kinda. So, we might be 50% less annoying than four dudes.

MRR: What do you think about gender politics with regard to your status as men and as punks—what space do you want to occupy and what contribution do you make to this conversation about feminism?
Arndt: It's a little odd commenting on feminism as a male-identified person but I'll happily answer, anyway. Feminist punk has been so strong and vibrant over the last few years. I think it's been the most prominent and unapologetic since the days of Riot Grrrl, and that's amazing. So many bands like G.L.O.S.S., Frau, Trash Kit, Las Otras, and 10,000 others saying rad, real and relevant shit. This is such an exciting time to be involved with DIY music and to see our subculture be more feminist that it has been in 25 years. Maybe the men of punk will take over again...but we won't let them. Hi Clara!
Marc: Hm, I don't know if I can add anything to that. Still I would say that most of the boys' bands have a lot to learn in terms of taking themselves way too seriously. Stop acting like you own punk! From the beginning there were always a super-inspiring group of women who made punk thrilling and more dangerous than any of that boy punk shit.

MRR: Do you want to tell me about the song "Pest"? The English explanation is "*don't let anybody tell you how to be / respect to those existing outside of prefabricated boxes*," which I think is really relevant to what I was just trying to make you do, which is take on a label which can mean a million things but also is sometimes too restricting. So I'm wondering if you want to tell me anything about what this song means or what it means to you.
Marc: I wrote those lyrics. It means so many different things. It's about growing up as a man and not conforming to what society wants / is expected of me. Acting according to your gender as a man. That's just the short version of that.
Arndt: Funny...when we play it, I always think of it as our solidarity song with people that choose to be different or have to be different. In a respectful way, our trans ally song. Actually, the way the lyrics are phrased is quite open, so it could generally just mean not conforming to expectations.
Marc: That's true. "Pest" also happens to be a song we tend to always play live.
Arndt: It makes me happy to play that song. [To Marc:] Well done for writing lyrics that are open to interpretation! Another thing that would speak against us being a Deutschpunk band.

MRR: If you feel comfortable elaborating on any of the aforementioned subtleties, I'd like to know about the lyrical content. I mean, Pansy Division has overt lyrics, but that isn't the only way to convey things.

Arndt: There's also this song called "Mann" which is our most explicitly feminist song. It's our rant against men. It's commenting in no uncertain terms on the loud male voice that fills up a room and drowns out the other voices in the room. Which is deliciously ironic, since when we play it live, our music drowns out everything in the room. Two men have got the mics! There's also a sweet line in the song about still being attracted to men, even though most of them are horrible and suck. And I make Marc sing it which makes me feel cheeky. By the way, we don't provide line-to-line translations of our songs. We tried doing that but we weren't able to translate the words and meaning directly, so we just have those one-liners in English.

MRR: What about "Familie, Werte, Traditionen" ("Family, Values, Traditions")?
Marc: Arndt, now I can comment on some lyrics you wrote! We're both not married and don't have children at the age of 40.
Arndt: No intentions to reproduce, either.
Marc: So, this is kinda about expectations again. Your family asking you when you're going to settle down and have a family of your own.
Arndt: It's about realizing at some point that maybe the model of having a nuclear family may not apply to you. It's more a statement rather than a conclusion about not being married and not having kids when a lot of people around seem to take that route. It's also how this is testing your ideas of community.
Marc: We were talking about that quite often at some point that we're getting older with our own families. Also, you see people around you settling down and having kids. So, maybe I will be alone when I'm old...

MRR: Having kids is also not a guarantee that they will take care of you when you're old.
Marc: Exactly.

MRR: What's the biggest goal of the project?
Marc: I think we had some goals for our band...We felt really lucky when we made it onto the *MRR* comp. Then we tried to make to a 12" and managed that. So maybe we should split up now...
Arndt: What we accomplished with this band is that we were friends when we started the band and became even better friends in the process. Also, so much fun stuff has come our way. This whole band is just an ode to friendship—between ourselves and within the DIY punk world at large. So hanging out with you here in our practice space in Berlin is all part of it or the fact that Flo has released two of our records on Heartfirt or that we got to go the USA or Spain with our shitty band. Getting asked to play gigs in general.

MRR: People asking you to do this.
Arndt: Yes, and being part of the whole punk thing and an on-going dialogue about politics, music and ideas with other people. This is not taken for granted.

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Gainesville's UV-TV play songs indebted to the Shop Assistants, Black Tambourine, and the Jesus and Mary Chain. They just released their debut LP Glass on Deranged Records. They are currently on tour in the US.

Rose: bass / vox Ryan: drums Ian: guitar / vox

MRR: How is the scene in Gainesville? Have you all lived there and been a part of it for long? Is No Idea still around?

Rose: Gainesville has been my home for about six years now. I moved here when I was nineteen so in many ways it has shaped who I am today. It's special to live in a place that is connected to the world in such random ways. I'm always learning about some crazy fact that happened here or meeting someone new who used to live here. It is changing, the town is growing, we'll see what happens.

Ryan: The scene is Gainesville has a ton of variety and a lot of really creative people in it who are really supportive of each other. I've only been here for about five years now, but in that time I've had so many great experiences playing shows and collaborating with people. It's easy to take for granted sometimes but whenever I take a moment to think about it, I remember how fortunate we are to live in a place like this. People come and go and things change often, but there has always been a strong scene that is open to punk and underground music in all its various forms. People in other places tend to think that Gainesville is a pop punk town but I think that is a pretty outdated and inaccurate notion. No Idea recently closed down, or at least severely reduced their activity, which is sad because the label has been such a staple here for so long. But I guess that's just the way things go, things change.

Ian: I think Gainesville can be a cool and easy city to live in but like any other city it has its ups and downs. It seems like it has these four-year windows where stuff gets awesome and then it dissolves cause it's kind of transient. (It's a college town!) People move away and bands break up. I've lived here for like seven years and there's been some really good bands come from here like St. Dad, Diet Cokeheads, Soda, and Allergy to name a few. I think we might be due for another cool period where people start good bands again.

MRR: How did you guys meet and what led you to start playing music together?

Rose: I met Ian when my band at the time was ending. I was pretty discouraged but I wanted to keep playing music all the time. Ian was in the same situation where his musical projects where slowly ending. At first I was going to perform live on his solo stuff but when we got down to it I couldn't just sit back and play someone else songs. We started fresh with songs like "Lilith," "Wasting Away," and "Fear." At that time we were working with another drummer and after a year we ended up working with Ryan, a friend of mine who I had been musically involved with before in the past.

Ian: Rose and I met through going to shows. Everyone in her band was moving away and everyone in my band didn't get along. I had about three or four songs and a lot of free time; I was unemployed and basically just living in a warehouse. We demo'd a bunch of stuff on a four track with a drum machine at first, then we started playing for a year with this other drummer. He wasn't really a drummer [though] and I think that was pretty clear—he would drop sticks and shit. Ryan saw us play and mentioned he wanted to try drumming in

the band. I had seen his other band Post Teens and they're killer so I was definitely into the idea of him joining.

Ryan: I had played in a band with Rose for a brief time a while back. I went out to the show when I heard she was in a new band and I loved the songs. Met Ian and we got along right away. When they told me they were looking for a drummer I jumped right in.

MRR: The band brings to mind Shop Assistants, Vaselines or even shoegaze melodies and sentiments. How do you find it playing with hardcore punk bands and being on Deranged, a label generally known for hardcore punk?
Ian: I think we write from a place that comes from a bunch of different influences but we all have an affinity towards the catchier side of noisy and weird pop music. I think we fit with hardcore and punk bands because we have the same energy and ethics as bands in that world. We write different styles of songs and want to maintain our integrity while trying to keep things interesting; not just lean towards writing only punk, shoegaze, or pop songs. On the *Glass* LP, there's a clear sense of that and we sequenced the record to be listened to that way. From start to finish, the record shows the progression of the band over the course of two years.
Ryan: I've been playing in hardcore bands and bands on the faster side of things since I started, so for me it's a natural fit. Music can come in so many different forms that share a common energy and intensity. I think the real test is the live show. If you can bring it live, then you'll always fit in. A band can scream and yell and seem as dangerous as they think they need to and still be boring to watch live, and a band can be catchy and still rip your face off. Style will always be secondary to energy; there's a vibe that you can't fake. I'm really excited about working with Deranged. It's a great label that's put out tons of good stuff. Seeing our record listed next to the new Career Suicide release was an awesome feeling!
Rose: I have more or less been a part of some hardcore / DIY punk scene since I was a teenager. It's a world that I feel connected to, so of course I love when we get to play hardcore / punk shows or be associated with a label like Deranged. Over the past few years I feel that for me punk has become more of an internalized persona, a truest empowerment to really do and be whatever you want to be. I think that the bands we listen to and appreciate have this element and we don't mind sticking out in our own way for that reason.

MRR: So that's interesting that the LP sounds like it's sequenced from earliest to latest material. The recording sounds really layered. What was the recording process like?
Ian: It was kind of difficult. We tried recording it at a real studio but we only had enough money for five songs and had to have our friend David Smith (Shitstorm, Rubbish, and Rauh) fill in on drums. It ended up working out but sounding too polished and slick. Ryan joined the band shortly after that session and it didn't feel right touring around with a record that he wasn't gonna be on, or that didn't reflect how we actually sounded. We ended up just doing it ourselves. I used a tape machine that I'd been recording other bands on and really liked the sound of a room in a local retired train station. It was converted into a DIY venue at the time. We spent a day tracking eleven songs which was really crazy and fast. We recorded everything live and did overdubs in my room. I tried mixing the thing on my own but it was taking forever and the tape machine kept breaking. I got my friend Andy Cook to mix the record cause he had a better ear and more patience for that sorta thing. I had started to give up on getting it done, and tried everything and it wasn't sounding right. I was thinking maybe we should record it again or just try getting more studio time. In retrospect, I think it sounds what we're like live and we worked really hard on it. I think it's super important for newer bands to try and record their own stuff, especially their first couple records.
Rose: The recording process was so difficult. We had gone through many loops to get to what we finally have now. We were doing it all on our own but we knew that this last session would have to be the one and if it wasn't, just go with it anyways. We set up our makeshift studio and went at it for two full days. I would say that the record is sequenced from older to newer material. The A-side consists of all the songs from our demo, and the B-side showcases the newer tracks. The sound of the record does have lot of layers—I think it is very obvious that we like a big sound. However that's not to say that this is our style or the sound we are going for. I feel like we can fit into many categories of music but in the end we just like creating an atmosphere while playing as simply and straightforwardly as possible.
Ryan: Recording this album was a lot different than other sessions I've done, in a good way. It was difficult because it was just us in there alone but it felt very comfortable. The space had a huge sound that was great to play in! It'll be tough for me to go back to a traditional studio setting after that. As far as tracking, I really liked what David and Matt (previous drummers) had done with the parts, so I followed their lead and just put my own style in at times.

MRR: You've got a tour coming up that I know is at least hitting the west coast. What are some other stops along the way, and are you looking forward to returning anywhere?
Rose: U.S Tour! East and West coasts, the Midwest and the South. We're currently still in the struggle of finalizing everything but the closer it approaches the more excited I get. We are going to new cities we have never been to and re-visiting the cities we have played. It's really nice to go back to a town you have toured once or twice through and seeing the friendship you have created.
Ian: I'm looking forward to going back to Texas—we met some really cool people there on earlier tours and it'll be cool to see them again. We waited a long time before doing a bigger tour because we only had a demo and a 7" out. It'll be cool to play New York, Chicago, LA, SF and some other big cities and see how the band does. We have a day off in Vegas too...
Ryan: I'm looking forward to seeing old friends and catching up especially in the northwest. Can't wait to see buddies in NY, LA, and NOLA. I'm always interested in playing in cities that I've never been to—looking forward to the unknown!

MRR: If you could travel back in time where would you go? Or, I guess alternately, if you could travel ahead in time what would you do?
Ian: I'd probably travel to the future or just live in the now. I think it's pretty silly to flirt with how things were better or worse in the past. I think the 1960s probably sucked just as much as the present day.
Ryan: I'd love to hear the music that people played thousands of years ago and to play along with them and communicate in that language. I sound like a fucking hippie! If I could see Thin Lizzy back in the day I would probably take that over most other options. Maybe see Atari Teenage Riot play in the middle of a riot.
Rose: I would love to see Heart, Abba and Patti Smith back in their day.

MRR: What do you think of the current political climate or do you try not to pay attention?

Rose: As much as I am deeply concerned about our current political state, I am also inspired. Right now is the time to stay awake or to wake up. It is important to consider the ways in which you can use your position for good. As a band we have been lucky enough to be a part of multiple benefit shows, supporting organizations like Bread and Roses, Peaceful Paths and the Dakota Pipeline Water Protectors. In the beginning we were like "oh, we're not a political band" but how could be not be? It is a huge waste of space to not have a meaning or a purpose within your work. Surely we won't change the world in large way but maybe we can push someone to create their own art or fight for what you want in this world.

Ian: Things are definitely fucked up right now and it's dumb not to pay attention. It seemed like the last eight years things were slowly getting better. Seeing all of that be dismantled sucks. I've been on the internet trying to get all this tour stuff worked out and for the last two to three months it's the only thing you see or hear about on social media. Racists, liars, misogynists and anti-Semites (while always existing) now feel like they're validated or justified in representing and believing in literal shit—which I think can make being in a band pretty disheartening. How can you go about self-promoting and being excited about music when there's all this more important heavy stuff going on? It's a weird thing to navigate and I think we're doing our best to figure it out. I definitely think despite of how bleak the world feels right now some incredible art is about to happen. People are pissed again and rightfully so I think the world needs more loud, aggressive, politically conscious music going on instead of jangly, compliant, Starbucks-sounding "indie" bands.

Ryan: Madness. It can be overwhelming to even begin to address all the insanity that has erupted lately. The patients are running the asylum. I hope that the good people of the world can effectively align themselves and resist the erosion of freedom and democracy. Don't give them an inch. I do get despondent at times, though. I'm thankful to have so many level-headed intelligent people in my life to get my mind right and remind me that hope is not lost. Things will always balance out in the end.

MRR: Just what is a UV-TV? Something that rhymes or some deeper concept?

Ian: The acronym stands for Ultra Violent Television which kinda makes sense more now than ever. We use UV-TV because it sounds like it doesn't fit in any genre in particular; it's kind of neutral.

Ryan: We really should probably start using the full version more. [There are] so many TV bands out there at the moment, we want to stand alone.

MRR: Any future plans?

Ian: I think we all want to go to Europe. We've also got this EP coming out sometime during the summer with Emotional Response Records. Might do some more touring. I think were really excited to work on the next LP. We recorded half of it and can't wait to start working on it again.

UV-TV Tour Dates: 4/6: Gainesville, FL 4/7: St Augustine, FL 4/8: Savannah, GA 4/9: Greensboro, NC 4/10: Richmond, VA 4/11: Baltimore, MD 4/12: Philadelphia, PA 4/13: Brooklyn, NY 4/14: Brooklyn, NY 4/17: Chicago, IL 4/18: Kansas City, MO 4/20: Albuquerque, NM 4/21: Tucson, AZ 4/22: Long Beach, CA 4/23: Los Angeles, CA 4/24: Davis, CA 4/25: Olympia, WA 4/26: Seattle, WA 4/27: Portland, OR 4/28: Oakland, CA 4/29: San Francisco, CA 5/3: San Antonio, TX 5/4: Austin, TX 5/5: Dallas, TX 5/6: New Orleans, LA 5/7: Birmingham, AL 5/9: Atlanta, GA

ATAXXIA

Ataxxia formed over a love for Scandi punk and are part of a crop of Minneapolis bands carrying on the Twin Cities' vibrant and fiercely DIY punk legacy. MRR's own Felix Havoc talked to them about punk history, why it's worth it to stick it out through a subzero winter, and the potential for punk to be a force for social change.

Photographs provided by Caitlin Harris. Artwork by Emily Styles and courtesy of the band.

Ataxxia is Ben: Bass Wes: Guitar Mike: Drums Stacey: Vocals

MRR: How did the band form? Did you coalesce around a vision or a sound that you sought to create? Or did the sound result from your initial collaborations?

Ben: Wes wanted to start something along the lines of Finnish punk worship—Chaos, Terveet Kädet, Rattus—and we were drinking and hanging out at the time and it seemed like a good idea.

Wes: I was also really into Norwegian punk as well, like the X-Port Plater records and also Data Morgana. We had talked some about wanting to sound different than other American bands in a general sense, and experimented with some different things. I think our vision has continuously changed since we started and I don't think it's really tied down to a specific style or era of punk in particular.

Stacey: I came in a little later, after Ben and Wes had been playing for a while. As for vision, regardless of what I aim for, my vocals are more or less what just comes out and feels real. I don't do punk worship very well, much to my own frustration, which is ridiculous to say. There has been plenty of trial and error on my part to figure out what works live versus recorded. But as a band things have gotten more dynamic over time, especially since Mike has joined. Even just last year's recording feels miles away from where we are now.

Mike: I'm the only non-original member. A little over a year ago the previous drummer Jamie left the band and they had some studio time booked so Wes asked if I wanted to learn their songs to record. We practiced just a few times that week and those recordings just now came out on the 7" on 25 Diamonds. At the time of recording I was thinking of it as a temporary thing but then we started playing shows and it's only gotten better and more fun since (writing new songs, playing out of town, etc).

MRR: Do you use any special gear like amps or effects pedals to get your sound?

Ben: The Boss Xtortion XT-2 guitar pedal on borrowed bass gear I think really gets that raw sound to going.
Wes: I like old Peavey gear because you can beat on it and it has a good sound. I use a Peavey Butcher head with and '80s Peavey cabinet, a distortion and an equalizer pedal.
Mike: I pretty much only play drums that don't belong to me, that's my secret. Ben's Xtortion pedal is pretty impressive and a key element because it makes even the nicest top of the line bass amp sound like total butt.
Stacey: I use a kind of exaggerated delay. I'm currently bouncing between a few pedals in trial and error to figure out what works live versus recorded. Before Ataxxia I've been most comfortable with super raw, blown-out vocals with little to no effects, so I have a love / hate relationship with this extra variable in the mix. Depending on the PA gear I'm connecting to, I sometimes just go with "fuck it" live because it's tedious and sucks the life out of me when effects go haywire. In those cases I would rather just roll with the sound of good ol' rage, but when it's on point on I'm into it.

MRR: Minneapolis has had a pretty solid punk scene going all the way back to Suicide Commandos in 1976. Where you think your efforts fit into that continuum?
Ben: I grew up in Minnesota so I got into bands like Misery, Ganglion, Red Menace, and the scene has always seemed very friendly and positive. I think we are doing our part to carry on that sort of attitude and we do our part to accept others into the punk community. I am grateful that Minneapolis has such a good punk scene—it definitely makes it easier for Minneapolis bands to get international attention. It's nice that people are interested in what we are doing it makes it more fun.
Wes: I moved to Minneapolis five years ago, and one of the first things I noticed is that there are a lot of punks of all ages, and a lot of older punks still heavily involved with things, which is quite different than where I am from in Kentucky. One of the first Minneapolis hardcore punk bands I saw when I moved here was Kontrasekt. I was really inspired by Bob, how he was playing some of the most intense punk music I had seen live, even though he's probably 30 years older than me. Minneapolis has a rich history of great DIY punk bands that allows this multi-generational community to exist. There are a lot of great new bands too, like Buddy System, Nose Ring, Lemonade, Zero, etc. and our current scene is definitely a natural continuation of Minneapolis punk.
Mike: I grew up in rural northern Minnesota and it was through Havoc, Profane Existence, and Fashionable Idiots that I found out about a lot of the music and people that would influence me as a teen. Duluth has had its own thing going for a long time and will always be very special to me, but it feels really good to now embrace Minneapolis as my home and getting to play music here that I love while also booking and playing almost exclusively DIY shows.
Stacey: Since I move here around thirteen years ago, it's been a goal to keep Minneapolis less flyover and more worthwhile to tour though. Whether that be through hosting and accommodating touring bands, booking shows and running DIY venues, or just trying to put on the best show I can to hold up my end in the spectrum of bands that come out of our city. We don't have the luxury of location or profile, so Minneapolis isn't an assumed stop on tours, especially for international bands. So much crazy talented and unique music comes out of this city, that rarely subscribes to specific trends. Random recent examples that come to mind are Buddy System, Uranium Club, Scaphe, Condominium, Zero. I love this city and will always aim to up Minneapolis punk however I can.

MRR: Minneapolis and the Upper Midwest get a bad rap sometimes, but I feel like this is a really great place to live, work, and create punk culture. Does living here and being part of this scene play a part in your sound and outlook?
Ben: Winter can get long, but it is a good time to be creative and get things accomplished. I like a lot of bands from a similar climate so there could be something to seasonal creativity. Overall, I get good vibes from Midwest punks—I think it is a very nurturing culture.
Wes: I more or less agree with Ben. I think climate and location does make Minneapolis less of a "destination" for moving or for touring. Punks here realize that we have to get along and collaborate to make things work, which is cool.
Mike: A big part of why I like staying as busy as I can with band stuff (I'm in eight active bands at the moment!) is so that I have a productive and creative way to get through the winter. And to generally distract me from everything I dislike about life. Hard to say if I'd be operating like that if I didn't live here (for better or worse).

MRR: Suppose we fire up the wayback machine, what bands would you most want go back in time and play with?
Ben: '77-era Discharge or glam-era Discharge.
Wes: *Hear Nothing...* era Discharge. Totalitär (even though they played very few shows), Kaaos, Armia, the Iconoclast.
Mike: I'd pick something not particularly relevant to our band: Hickey, the Wipers (*Is This Real?* lineup), Manowar in 1984, Goo Goo Dolls in 1994, Pinhead Gunpowder, Frozen Teens (to remind me of a simpler time), or Neon Piss again (so I could say what's up to Barker).

MRR: After struggling to keep venues afloat in the '90s and '00s it seems like Minneapolis has resolved to rely on house shows and the occasional bar gig. How do you think relying so heavily on house shows affects the local scene?
Ben: I think house shows do make things more cliquey and slightly more inaccessible to some people. There are always cool DIY spaces that are opening and closing in Minneapolis and I like these venues best—they have good energy and exciting atmosphere. I feel good about the spaces we have going in Minneapolis, since I can go to shows without feeling like I'm supporting some shitty culture.
Mike: I'm a big fan of house shows and it's great how consistently they've been available for shows here. Plenty of houses have come and gone but some have been going for years now. It's great to have options to book pretty much any show at that isn't a bar. I don't think we need 'em. DIY venues that aren't just houses are ideal though, for reasons Ben mentioned but also for size alone. Medusa was a crucial part of the scene, and then so was Secret Service. Now we've got a space called Coming Soon which is awesome and open to covering pretty much everything that MPLS freaks have to offer. It's still a smallish basement though. I hope another warehouse option comes up but it's becoming less realistic to sustain spaces like that.
Wes: I almost can't imagine living in a part of the United States without basements. Basement shows allow us to make music on our own terms without having to deal with bar owners who only care about the bottom line, draw, liquor sales, etc. When warehouse spaces close, and when bars do sketchy things, you

can always do basement shows.

Stacey: We're really fortunate to have these next-level DIY spaces like the Medusa, Secret Service, Coming Soon, Mala, the Church, the old Bedlam, and countless basements that have been active for years, but the defining factor in the city's success in keeping these venues long-running isn't really in availability of space, but the commitment of the people to collectively throw down their time, money, energy, and sometimes their sanity to keep them up and running. That shit *a lot* of work, and it speaks to the dedication of our community that these DIY spaces are a defining character of Minneapolis.

MRR: Tell us about your activities outside the band. I am always fascinated by the different life paths taken by the punks around me, you never know if someone you meet at a show is going to be a welder, a scientist or a monk or whatever.

Ben: I'm into making stuff out of leather and that has turned more or less into my occupation. As far as punk stuff goes I also play in other bands and I volunteer at Extreme Noise. Rats are cool—I have two named Ismit and Nukke.

Wes: I am in school, working towards an Electrical Engineering degree. In my free time I like to fiddle with tube amplifiers, draw, and bicycle. I used to draw a lot of punk fliers, t-shirt designs, etc., but that has gone to the wayside some due to time constraints and this band has become a big creative outlet for me.

Mike: Last winter Ben and I both worked building Ice Castles in Eden Prairie, that was pretty cool. Besides that I work at a couple theaters downtown, and do the occasional medical study (shout out to Davita Clinical Research). I like going to the gym a lot, I guess with my pipe dreams of becoming a pro wrestler some day.

Stacey: Depending on the season, I spend any free time I can find gardening or fermenting stuff, practicing yoga, singing too loud to '90s pop music while kickboxing, spacing out on my bike, or hanging with my forever growing household of animals. Strays seem to find me, with the most recent addition being a foster quail that Ben named Dan. I work in a pretty unique position in a technical field that I fell into, in a roundabout way, due to my time living at a gross punk house called the Cube.

MRR: If you were to pick a work of art

(record, book, movie, painting whatever) that has most influenced you and your music what would it be?
Ben: Crass is super sick... so is *Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing.*
Mike: Since I drum in this band I'll say the drummers that probably influenced me the most when I was learning as a teen was Aesop Dekker, Jon-Paul Burns, Aaron Cometbus, Will Risk, Max Ward, and Ski.
Wes: Mob 47 and Totalitär records. I have always loved how instead of writing straight translations from Swedish, Totalitär describes what the songs mean to them.
Stacey: I could say something way more punk but if I'm being honest, Amy Winehouse's album *Back to Black.*

MRR: Who writes the lyrics? What kind of topics are addressed?
Stacey: I write most of the lyrics, with contributions from Wes as well. Regardless of topic, most come from the place of conflict and contradiction in my own head. Some lyrics hit on things you'd expect, like political or social injustices, or hypocrisies within the punk community. Throw in a dash of rage towards incessant sexism everywhere I go or hopelessness in the addictions and death that seems to close in on our community. So yeah, we keep it light. Lately the songs have been coming from more positive place though, making our newer stuff really fun and motivating to play.

MRR: Does this band have a political stance? When I was young a lot of bands wore their politics on their sleeve (Crass, Conflict, and the like). Overt politicization seems to have fallen out of favor. Where do politics fit into the punk scene?
Ben: We are on that "be who you wanna be, do what you wanna do" kind of style. Anarchy and freedom is my personal political outlook. I think making a difference in your community with friends and loved ones affects your life more than any political bullshit.
Wes: With Trump's rise to power it's apparent that a lot of right wing fringe groups, fascists, and racist organizations feel empowered and believe they can act without consequence. It's important right now to take a stance against that, in some way. I also don't think that a band has to be overtly political in order to be powerful. Punk music gives people an outlet to vent their frustrations and remember that being different, thinking differently is OK, and that is powerful on it's own. Some of our lyrics are political, some of them are personal. I don't have any interest in playing in an apolitical band.

MRR: Is punk still, or was it ever a force for social change? Or an escapist subculture?
Ben: Punk is what you make it. It affects some people's lives in a big way and others not at all.
Wes: Some people definitely use punk to escape or create cliques, or are only interested in fashion and materialistic aspects of punk instead of its meaning as a form of expression or rebellion. I'm not into that. I do think that in order for punk to remain a relevant force for change, punks need to become more comfortable discussing politics outside of the community so that they aren't stuck in an echo chamber. It can be difficult to have discussions with people like coworkers or family and say that something they believe is problematic, but it is also necessary sometimes.
Stacey: It's either or, or both, depending on who you ask. The analogy of punk being one's religion makes sense to me in how varied the definition can be to the individual. I grew up in a super religious small town and remember questioning the different interpretations of how "being Christian" was defined, from the all-in evangelicals that live and breath everything prescribed to them in that doctrine, or the people that clocked in every Sunday so just they can check that box off on their "good Christian" punchcard. Others turned to church to escape the guilt they felt from being a terrible person for most of their lives. Good luck convincing any one of them that they're not Christian—they all wear that badge and own that sense of belonging to a larger community. Hopefully you're still following me here, this actually might be a pretty shitty analogy. Punk has some parallels in that it can be a catalyst of change, but like Wes said, it's easy for it to become an echo chamber with an inflated sense of social progress when little effort is made to point that collective voice outward into the world.

On the other hand, punk for many is just about playing fucking good music or discovering sick bands, or an inclusive space to find like-minded people to sympathize in the struggle of dealing with that fucked up outside world, or even those that subscribe to it as an escapist social scene to party. I don't know if any of these perspectives are really wrong or "not punk." Hopefully, regardless of the entry point, punk leads to challenging oneself and others to push for that change. This is all just a really long-winded way to say exactly what Ben said much more succinctly. As much as we all have ideals of what punk could or should be, by nature it can't really be quantified.

MRR: Like Wes mentioned, our country has recently taken a turn to the radical right. While it's bad for the country as a whole, some people think it's going to lead to a resurgence of punk and protest, what are your thoughts?
Ben: It's been kind of cool lately how people have been talking about being dissatisfied with the system. No one writes songs about how great their health care plan is so I'm sure a lot of good art will come out of it.
Wes: It's important to note that the turn towards the right is a global phenomenon and not limited to our country. Things have been happening in Greece and Brexit happened prior to Trump. You can only push a person so far, and so many people were already living on the edge prior to the last election. I'm not looking forward to the degradation of people's welfare just because some good records might come out of it.
Mike: Yeah, it's really good that the general population is realizing more that things need to change and protesting is happening more and more on a larger scale. I hope that continues to get more extreme. I don't particularly care either way what punk records happen because of it.

Ataxxia have a new record out on 25 Diamonds. You can listen at ataxxia.bandcamp.com.

REPTILE RANCH

1970s Wales is not a typical first thought when it comes to punk history but it was here that Reptile Ranch *established their unique vision. Amid the demise of the Ebbw Valley coal industry in the mid '70s three friends came together to play music. After years tinkering their craft they found like-minded musicians in Cardiff (including the newly formed Young Marble Giants), and with influence from the growing DIY movement in the UK, the band produced two stunning EPs and two compilations of the Wales DIY scene on their own Z Block label. DIY to the fullest, the records are handmade, home-recorded, and massive in scope. Thirty-five plus years later their discography, along with outtakes and live material is being reissued on New Haven, CT's C/Site Recordings, out now.*

MRR: First things first, when did Reptile Ranch start and who were the members of the band? When did the band end?
Technically, Reptile Ranch started a week or so after we collected the blank labelled "Lifeguard" singles from the London pressing plant. We'd pressed the first single before we had a name for the band. All we had at that point was the label name, Z Block and a few hundred blank 7" singles in plain paper sleeves.

Funnily enough, like my later band Weekend, Reptile Ranch was a merger of two distinct projects; the first begun by me and Phil John sometime around 1974, the other a solo project by Simon Smith. Both projects had written an album's worth of material, none of which ever got used by Reptile Ranch. Andrew Tucker brokered the merger and became the first bass player. We held "rehearsals" at Cross Keys rugby club function hall, sometimes joined by Alan Goodwin, Tucker's cousin, on saxophone. The material was improvised and was pretty poor as far as I can recall. Eventually, we had to have an awkward conversation with Andrew to allow Phil John to take over the bass role simply because Andrew's bass playing was so artless. As soon as we started writing with the core of Simon, Phil, and myself around 1977, we were Reptile Ranch in all but name.

MRR: What was the musical climate in Wales / Cardiff at the time the band started? Were there a lot of bands in the city at that time?
We were all living up the Ebbw valley, north of Newport at the time. With the future of the coalmines under threat and no other industry in a position to replace it, all the valleys communities felt insecure about the future. The school we all attended was nestled between two coalmines and a rugby ground in Newbridge. Life without coalmines was hard to imagine back then. As for Cardiff, it was distant and not a frequent trip. We would go there for arty films (Chapter Arts Centre), shopping in Kelly's second-hand vinyl stall in the old market and the occasional gig. We did discover Grassroots where, every time we visited it seemed to be the same band playing the same song "Rocky Mountain Way" (Joe Walsh). Little did we know that this was typical of Cardiff.

MRR: Were any of you involved with bands prior to Reptile Ranch?
I dabbled around with some amateur rockers but the fact that they were Status Quo nuts made the whole thing a bit limiting. Maybe I was keeping my options open but I really wanted to make a career out of music one way or another.

Because Reptile Ranch were not mainstream rockers, we could never be taken seriously up the valley and we knew as soon as we became defined as "punk" that we would have to escape the valley and its narrow-minded attitudes if we were to succeed. This fear was verified in 1979 when we got canned off stage after two songs in Simon's hom-town, where we'd all gone to school, in the Miners' Institute. I think the audience actually wanted to kill us.

MRR: Was the mid-late '70s English punk scene influential to what was happening then in Wales?
I didn't see the punk scene as "English" despite the fact that there was virtually no punk scene in Wales. Punk was more universal; not to be defined by national boundaries but fairly early on, there appeared to be two distinct camps within the punk scene; the "fashion punks," of whom many seemed to be the bourgeoisie in fancy dress, and the "political punks" who felt that punk was a youth movement capable of changing the status quo. When DIY came to our attention, I felt our moment had come.

MRR: Reptile Ranch were making records with a DIY aesthetic pretty early on. What pushed you towards this? I know you were close with Scritti Politti—did they help move you towards producing your own records?
I think the pivotal moment was the Buzzcocks' *Spiral Scratch* EP and, as a result, there seemed to be another splintering within the punk movement; DIY as a political force against the monopoly of the major record labels and, on the other side, DIY as glorified demo to get a major record deal. The Desperate Bicycles and, more importantly for us personally, Scritti Politti, encouraged us to join what was fast becoming a movement. We responded to Scritti Politti's offer of help on the cover of the mind-blowingly brilliant *Skank Bloc Bologna* by sending a letter to their Carol Street address. Within a couple of weeks we got a really fat wad of information and generous support, pointing out their Welsh connections and generally welcoming us into the DIY fold.

Z Block (i.e. Reptile Ranch plus Andrew Tucker in a quasi-managerial role) caught the anti-establishment bug and quickly became anarchist DIY evangelists; "Smash the majors!" became the collective rallying cry.

As far as aesthetics goes, I think it was Eno who first discussed the naïve charm of "non-musicians" playing music and I think part of it was also trying to find a music form that expressed DIYers' collective loathing of the major labels and their juggernaut acts. We opposed the control the majors had over their bands and the press, right down to controlling the RRP of every record sold in the UK shops. That's one reason we always put "pay no more than..." on the label even though it was illegal.

In an utterly bizarre twist, we bumped into Scritti Politti on our way home from collecting the blank-labelled single, *Lifeguard,* from London. They were with Ian Penman, a journalist from the *NME*, who penned a review, not so much of the music as the unbelievable coincidence of meeting us in a motorway service station. On that road trip, we had also dropped off some singles to Rough Trade. Geoff Travis was crucial to the growth of DIY and personally gave us great support at this time.

MRR: In my mind I associate Reptile Ranch / Z Block with many seemingly like-minded British bands / labels of the same time period (Deleted Records, Fuck Off Records, Desperate Bicycles, The Door & the Window, Danny & the Dressmakers, etc). Was there much commingling between Welsh and British bands? Were you aware of the DIY and post-punk bands in Britain and the DIY message of bands like Desperate Bicycles?
Similar to the way the "political punks" forged powerful mutual support networks with other youth movements like ska, reggae, red skins etc. Z Block very much felt part of a DIY movement that appeared to be wrecking the majors although, looking back, maybe we collectively took a little more credit than we were due. Although we felt part of something bigger and did cooperate between us in many ways, in practical terms, it was mainly Rough Trade's support and distribution network that made DIY into a credible force.

MRR: Reptile Ranch has a very unique sound, and was also doing a lot of improvising and sort of *out there* stuff. What music specifically was influencing Reptile Ranch in your time as a band?
I can't remember whether it was part of our philosophy to always assemble work from improvised, recorded material, but that is mainly what made the band's unique sound. That, and the amazing role of Phil's bass that completely obscured the fact that the band had no drummer, especially live. We all had our individual influences, mine being the Beatles, Welsh chapel hymns, Eno, and the Sex Pistols. Our common influences included Roxy Music, the Velvet Underground, Talking Heads, Television, XTC and later a mass of obscure DIY singles. In terms of the band's musical influences, the educational role of Andrew Tucker and his immense record collection can't be underestimated.

MRR: Grassroots, from my understanding, was a cafe and youth center. What was your involvement with that space? Were there a lot of shows there? What else was happening there other than musical endeavours? Was it a central meeting place for the Cardiff scene?
Grassroots was actually very important. As I said before, we used to visit the place whenever we visited Cardiff to try and sound out the competition. I may have exaggerated when I said we always saw the same band performing "Rocky Mountain Way" on a Saturday afternoon, fronted by Judith Rowland, a friend of Alison Statton I later discovered, but it's not much of an exaggeration. That's pretty much what South Wales sounded like.

When we moved from the Ebbw valley to Splott, a bleak, post-industrial area formerly dominated by a steelworks and the docks, we expected to find a host of like-minded progressives itching to join our DIY revolution. What we actually encountered was apathy, bland plagiarism but mainly old school Rhythm & Blues, much of which was very good but the antithesis of we aspired to. As a result of this predominantly backward-looking music culture, there were very few venues where "punk" bands could play. Anything that wasn't conventional rock'n'roll was labelled punk and punk meant trouble (even though it rarely did, in practice).

Grassroots was the only venue where you could play anything you liked, even free improvisation, which Z Blockers did occasionally as Reptile Cancer. So it is not *that* surprising that when two left-field, post-punk trios played to a handful of disinterested teenagers within a couple of weeks of each other in May 1979, the two units would inevitably form a bond. The bands in question were Young Marble Giants and Reptile Ranch and I have been playing with these guys in one format or another for the last 36 years.

MRR: I know your 7"s were recorded there. Was there a full studio at Grassroots?
Z Block took DIY to new heights when we ditched the traditional studio and built our own temporary studio in the then unused upstairs rooms of Grassroots to record the *Is The War Over?* compilation LP, *Animal Noises* and *Rough Cuts*, a compilation EP with hired equipment.

The studio consisted of an eight-track tape recorded and mixing console in one room and some foam blocks on the walls, borrowed equipment and basic microphones in another. Grassroots is still going and YMG did a benefit gig for them a year or so ago.

MRR: Your label Z Block released the two Reptile Ranch 7"s, as well as two compilations (*Rough Cuts* 7" and *Is The War Over?* LP). Were all of the bands from Wales? Were you playing shows regularly with bands like Young Marble Giants, Riotous Brothers, the New Form, and other bands from the compilations?
Actually, the bands you mention are probably the only bands we played with regularly. New Form, as far as I remember, were all English but they studied in Cardiff University and were musically active throughout their time there. YMG felt like soul mates, in fact I was in awe of them from the start. They didn't feel like a Cardiff band inasmuch as Cardiff didn't deserve them. New Form were good friends, in fact, my Weekend song "Nostalgia" which has been sampled by Mary J. Blige was partly inspired by the tragic death of their drummer, Paul Robinson; *"some of them are dead."* His was the first funeral I attended, aged 20.

There were relatively few venues that would allow post-punk bands to play for fear of violence so those of us that fell into that category often invited each other to play "support" where possible.

Later in 1980, The Ghoulies' Charlie Summers who featured on Z Block's Rough Cuts EP, recruited Reptile Ranch as a backing band on three of the tracks on his album *Dogged By Dogma* which also featured heroes of mine Dave Stewart and Pip Pyle of Hatfield and the North and National Health. Dave Stewart went on to have a UK no.1 the following year with Barbara Gaskin ("It's My Party").

MRR: How were you getting your records out to the world at large? Was Rough Trade helpful for getting them distributed?
Without Rough Trade, and specifically Geoff Travis, there is a massive chunk of music that would never have been heard. DIY (which, at the time was synonymous with "indie"), a lot of reggae acts, Sound of Soweto and other African music releases that no other label would ever have supported. It is difficult to imagine the UK music scene without the contribution Rough Trade made.

We were turned on to Rough Trade by Scritti Politti. Rough Trade distributed Z Block records. We, in turn, turned Rough Trade on to Young Marble Giants. In true indie fashion, Rough Trade did not interfere in the creative process apart from recommending co-producers who were both brilliant.

MRR: The Reptile Ranch 7"s are from 1979 and 1980. Did the band continue for much longer beyond 1980?
Reptile Ranch built to a peak from 1975 to 1980 when the last Z Block records were released. We built a good following in Cardiff, probably stronger than Young Marble Giants's until their *Sounds* front page. After YMG got their deal with Rough Trade (as a direct result of ZA1), I grew unsure that our plan was workable. We (Z Block) had had discussions with Green Gartside of Scritti Politti while he was convalescing in Caerleon about the future of indie music. Green was talking about Michael Jackson and Chic and how independent music didn't have to sound like "indie" music which had yet to be properly defined. For me, that was probably the pivotal moment in terms of the future of my relationship with Reptile Ranch. Writer / musicians could be politically and culturally independent (as Scritti Politti and Weekend were) and that meant that they were free to create and define whatever music style they desired.

My then-girlfriend, Lisa Madsen, had been recruited into Reptile Ranch and we had acquired a drummer along the way. For me, the musical aspirations with which we had started seemed to dissolve and I felt I had to look for a different route forward.

MRR: Once Reptile Ranch had broken up what followed for all the members?
I started writing with Alison Statton soon after the dissolution of Young Marble Giants in 1981 and we formed Weekend later that year, signing to Rough Trade in December. Despite the very un-punk sound of Weekend, we were all passionate and experienced DIYers and vehemently independent, dictating our terms to the label and not tolerating any creative interference. That is what we understood "indie" to mean. Weekend went on to be one of Rough Trade's most profitable bands on the label.

I continued my DIY career in Cardiff with Table Table, which continued throughout the Weekend era and after that, releasing Bomb & Dagger's *No Real Place* on DIY label Splott Sounds in 1986 and a cassette LP *Peace, Bread & Land* a couple of years later. The music became more agit-prop to the point that it drove itself into a blind alley by 1989.

In 1990, I left Cardiff for London where I became a successful research analyst in a boutique international research agency following the birth of my son.

Alison and I have continued to work together, releasing a couple of DIY albums on small indie labels and have a new album near completion.

MRR: You have the discography / unreleased LP coming out on C/Site Recordings but I understand there are other Z Block related

releases coming in the near future. What else is coming down the pipeline for release?

I am finalizing recordings that come from the years following the Reptile Ranch split. "The Pepper Trees" was a project commissioned by an American promoter in the mid '80s aiming to cover the writing period between 1981 and 1989. The material came from bands that preformed in Cardiff as Table Table, 2&1, The Weird Club and Bomb & Dagger between 1981 and 1989.

After quite a delay, Alison Statton and I are putting the final touches to an album we started recording in 1995. Nearly all the material is new and I feel that we are generating material to a standard that, in my opinion, we haven't achieved since Weekend. As ever, we remain fiercely independent.

I am also trying to organise a grand Z Block reunion event which may lead to an alternative Z Block compilation LP. We'll see. I'll be posting updates on zblock.co.uk soon

MRR: Any closing comments?

I am immensely proud of what we achived. Looking back, the idea of a bunch of teenagers from "the valleys" with no funds turning up in Cardiff and organizing and releasing a DIY LP is impressive. I have never lost my passion for DIY and independence in the music industry and I still believe that much of the best and most creative music has been, and will continue to be produced this way. For me, punk was never about fashion or even a particular sound or style. Punk was an attitude and a lifestyle built on hostility to the status quo in general and record companies in perticular. In that respect, I have always been and always will be a punk.

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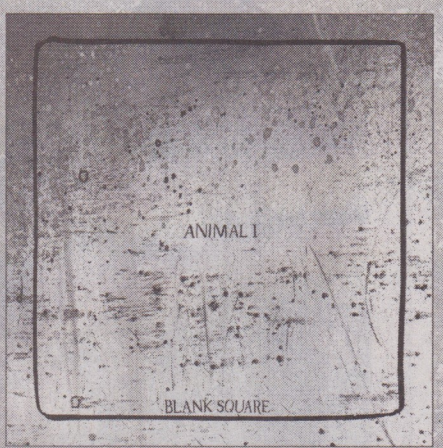

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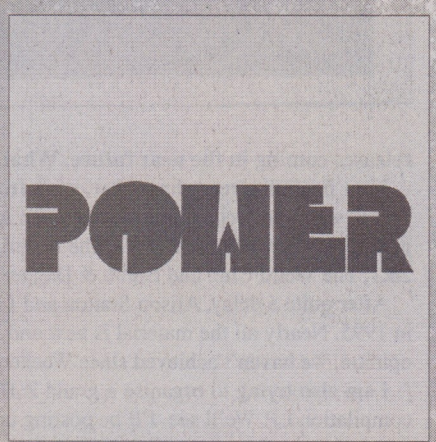

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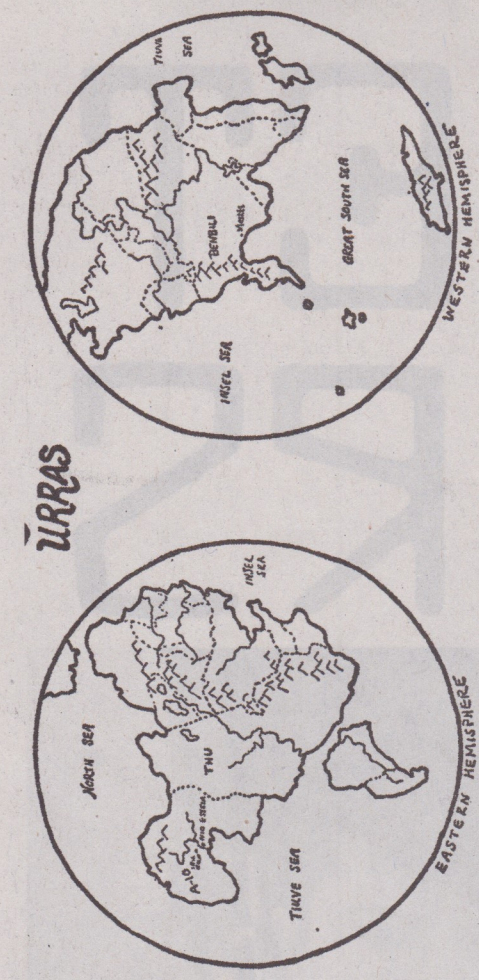
STREET EATERS

Longtime hyper-political East Bay band (and MRR *contributors!) Street Eaters are one of the hardest working bands in punk. They do absolutely everything themselves: all their own recordings, mixing, puting out records on their own label, silkscreening their own shirts, devising and filming their own music videos, booking their own tours. They even practice in a freestanding sound-proofed box in their garage. Nothing can stop them! They have carved out a place for themselves worldwide, inventing a genre, truewave, that they use to describe their sound as well as the bands they like to put on the tape comps they also make themselves. There is always a plan on the horizon, a project in the works. I interviewed them about their new album and some of the changes that have been guiding their work.*

Introduction and interview by Julia Booz.
Photos provided by Shawnacee Schneider. Art by Miriam Klein Stahl



MRR: Tell me about Truewave. The parameters, what defines the sound?
John: Truewave is the sound of the void being born. Plus, unlike lesser genres, you can in fact have both Truewave *and* the Truth. It's right there in the name. Truewave.

MRR: OK, yeah, but what does it sound like?
Megan: I think it would be hard to squeeze into a sub-genre for the discogs crowd, but it is definitely punk. It's bands we like: see *Frequency of the Truewave* compilation volumes I and II.

MRR: How did the concept for your third album, *The Envoy*, come about? In the sneak preview I got to hear, I noticed that Megan you sing a lot more than John does.
Megan: I got into reading Ursula K. Le Guin through Arwen Curry, who is currently working on a documentary about the author (check out the interview we did in *MRR* issue #400.) Arwen lent me a few books and I was hooked. The two books I really fell for, *The Dispossessed* and *Left Hand of Darkness*, carry a lot of the same themes that we've have been writing about since the beginning, so while reading the books I started envisioning the parallels and the idea of the concept record started to take shape. The first couple of songs we wrote for the record were loosely based on the books, but at a certain point, I think with the song "Means," I decided to get real and work Le Guin's words into the lyrics directly. It was really liberating to start in this context, and then write music and lyrics with our own personal take. I sing a bit more because I ended up taking the lead with the writing on this album.
John: One really great thing about UKL's books, and probably what draws so many punks and queers and radicals to them, is that for all the fantastic scenarios and worlds she creates she doesn't ever shy away from taking a deconstructive and non-romanticized gaze at power dynamics, social constructs, individual human (and non-human) vulnerability, and intersectionality in the layers of oppression / resistance that are present in not just the obvious macro-contexts but all the way down to interactions with people in our radical communities and those closest to us—comrades, family, partners, lovers. In the context of our band writing lyrics / vocals for a punk concept record based on UKL's works, Megan's voice is way more appropriate and close to the spirit of the source material than my own, and I feel lucky to get to share space with and help center her voice. Besides, since we recorded this album ourselves I got the creative satisfaction of diving deep into a beautiful, deeply weird rabbit hole of layering oversaturated bass overdubs / tonal feedback and alternately abrasive / ominous / soothing static noise space sounds to match what I feel the books sound like and what Megan was doing. Somehow, this all still ended up being a punk recording; probably because we are punks and no matter how you slice it Megan plays fast and beats the shit out of her drums, plus I still really don't know how to play bass.

MRR: Is this the first time you've recorded it all yourselves?
Megan: I've recorded on a four-track for one of our 7"s before, but this is the first full-length I've recorded for us. I finally pieced together all the right parts for a recording rig and we hammered the songs out. Since we weren't on a studio clock this time, we were able to experiment more with the songs and different sounds, especially during the interludes. It was great to get weird, like, really weird, and not give a fuck. I finally got to use my freaky Mills College influences on a punk record!
John: We've enjoyed recording with a few engineers / studios in the past (Stan Wright is amazing) but the nature of this record really meant that we had to do it ourselves. It was a sweet luxury to get to spend hours layering textural and tonal bass feedback tracks, alternately harsh and soothing modulated / oscillating / delayed static hiss from a modded karaoke unit, ominous deep space sounds from all kinds of sources (the 13000 year old extraterrestrial satellite called Black Knight sounds pretty rad run through a fuzz pedal), mountain-size icebergs cracking and slipping into the ocean while seals freak out and shoot sonar at them...We ended up recording well over an hour of finished music, which is why we will probably release a companion tape for the record with all the instrumental stuff (some of which made it onto the album proper, as well). I just don't know whether it'll be more like Neurosis *Times of Grace* / *Grace*-style, some Psychic TV-type thing where you are supposed to have a flashing blue light behind you and a red one in front of you flashing at a different rate, or the Neil Young *Dead Man* soundtrack. Definitely not as good as any of those, but what is really?
Megan: For the audio nerds, I mainly did all the tracks using a UA 610 pre-amp that was sounding so perfectly fucked up and in the red, and at the very end we figured out that was because the tubes were about to blow the whole time. After the last song, the tubes blew! It's a sound that cannot be replicated, and I'm really happy we caught it by chance.

MRR: Damn, lucky they didn't blow 'til the end, and yay, college pays off! Do you think you'll record other bands in the future?

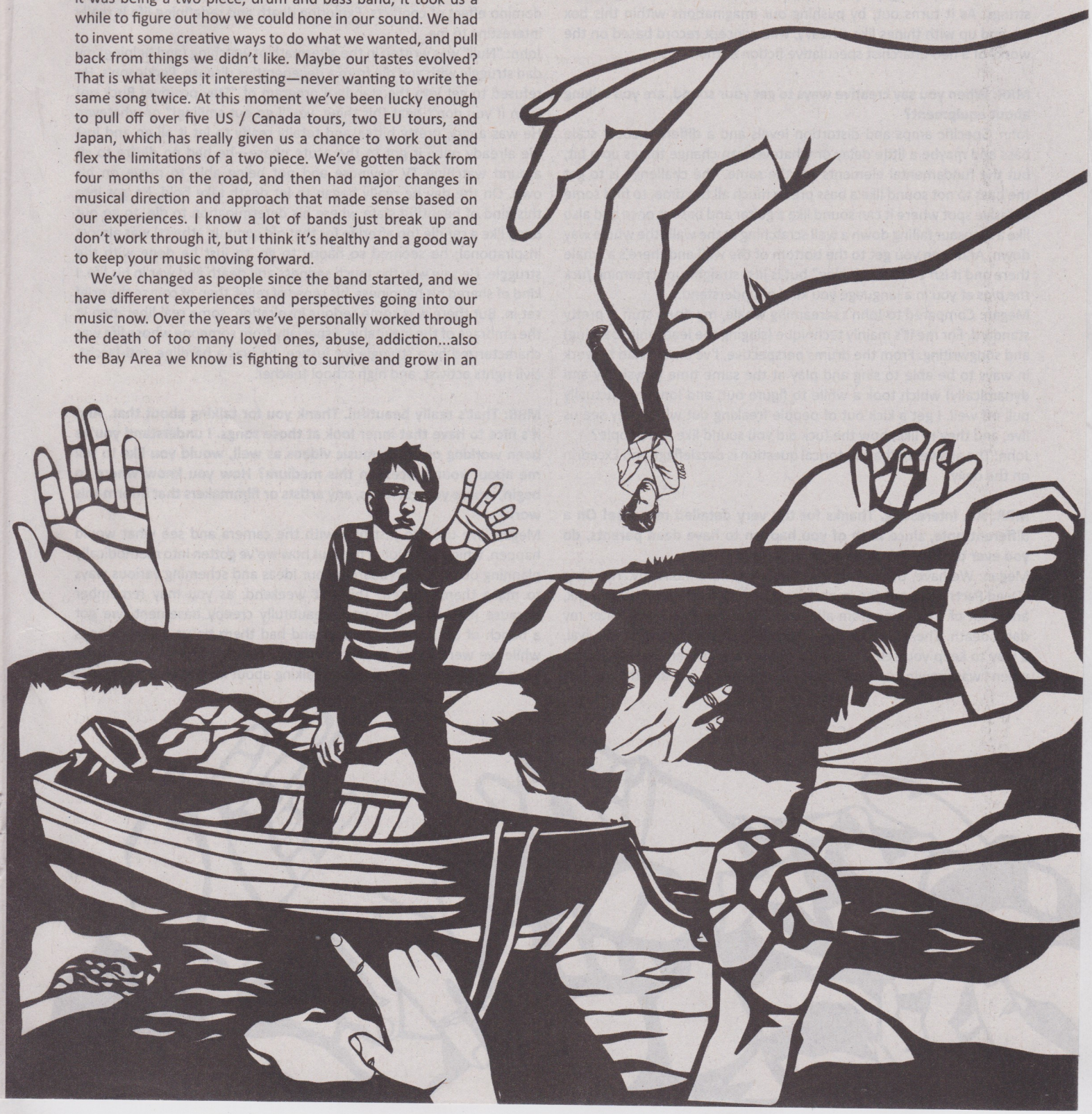
Megan: That depends on how much time I have and how cool the band is. So for the right project, maaaaaybe.

MRR: How would you say your sound has developed over the years? I've noticed it getting darker and thicker, more dissonant...

Megan: Our subject matter was always dark, but you're right, our sound got darker since our first record! I think part of it was being a two-piece, drum and bass band, it took us a while to figure out how we could hone in our sound. We had to invent some creative ways to do what we wanted, and pull back from things we didn't like. Maybe our tastes evolved? That is what keeps it interesting—never wanting to write the same song twice. At this moment we've been lucky enough to pull off over five US / Canada tours, two EU tours, and Japan, which has really given us a chance to work out and flex the limitations of a two piece. We've gotten back from four months on the road, and then had major changes in musical direction and approach that made sense based on our experiences. I know a lot of bands just break up and don't work through it, but I think it's healthy and a good way to keep your music moving forward.

We've changed as people since the band started, and we have different experiences and perspectives going into our music now. Over the years we've personally worked through the death of too many loved ones, abuse, addiction...also the Bay Area we know is fighting to survive and grow in an environment increasingly hostile to queers, POC, artists, and non-wealthy people trying to skate by on the margins.

John: Yeah, things have gotten heavier and more ominous in the last few years in and around our lives (not to mention the world at large), and the music is certainly reflective of that. Sonic wildness notwithstanding, though, Street Eaters has always been philosophically a hardcore project; we have a negative / dark / angry lyrical outlook, a traditional early '80s-style punk ethic with regard to intensive touring and high-energy shows (i.e. in Europe we book and drive ourselves and don't take days off, probably because we are cheap as much as anything else), and some weird self-imposed musical rules we don't break. The first day we ever practiced it was as a two-piece band with loud and fast but dynamic drums, ugly



cranked-gain overdrive from bass played mainly in power and barre chords through early '80s solid state amps (especially Peavey TNT), and intense dual vocals, and we decided to keep those elements pretty much the same.

The interesting thing we have discovered is that in spite of—or maybe because of—those self-imposed instrumental and tonal limitations we have been able to more-freely explore a wide range of songwriting and textural ideas and themes; trying to get as much noise and texture as possible out of our idiosyncratic minimalist setup. I mean, it's like this for every three- or four-piece band too, to some extent, but from the bass perspective it is a worthwhile challenge to fill the necessary sonic space and keep things propulsive / powerful / weird with a total of four strings. As it turns out, by pushing our imaginations within this box we end up with things like a heavy, wild concept record based on the works of a neo-anarchist speculative fiction author.

MRR: When you say creative ways to get your sound, are you talking about equipment?

John: Specific amps and distortion levels and a different short scale bass and maybe a little delay or whatever can change things up a bit, but the fundamental elements are the same. The challenge is to get the bass to not sound like a bass pretty much all the time, to find some abrasive spot where it can sound like a guitar and bass at once and also like a dinosaur falling down a well scratching at the walls the whole way down. And then you get to the bottom of the well and there's a whale there and it isn't "whale singing" but is just straight-up screaming *fuck the pigs* at you in a language you kind of understand.

Megan: Compared to John's screaming whale, my drum stuff is pretty standard. For me it's mainly technique (singing the lead while bashing) and songwriting. From the drums perspective, I've always had to work in ways to be able to sing and play at the same time (physically and dynamically) which took a while to figure out, and longer to actually pull off well. I get a kick out of people freaking out when they see us live, and they're like, how the fuck did you sound like five people?

John: The answer to that rhetorical question is dazzleflage and Excedrin on the daily.

MRR: Ah, interesting. Thanks for the very detailed response! On a different note, since both of you happen to have dead parents, do you ever try to speak to them through song?

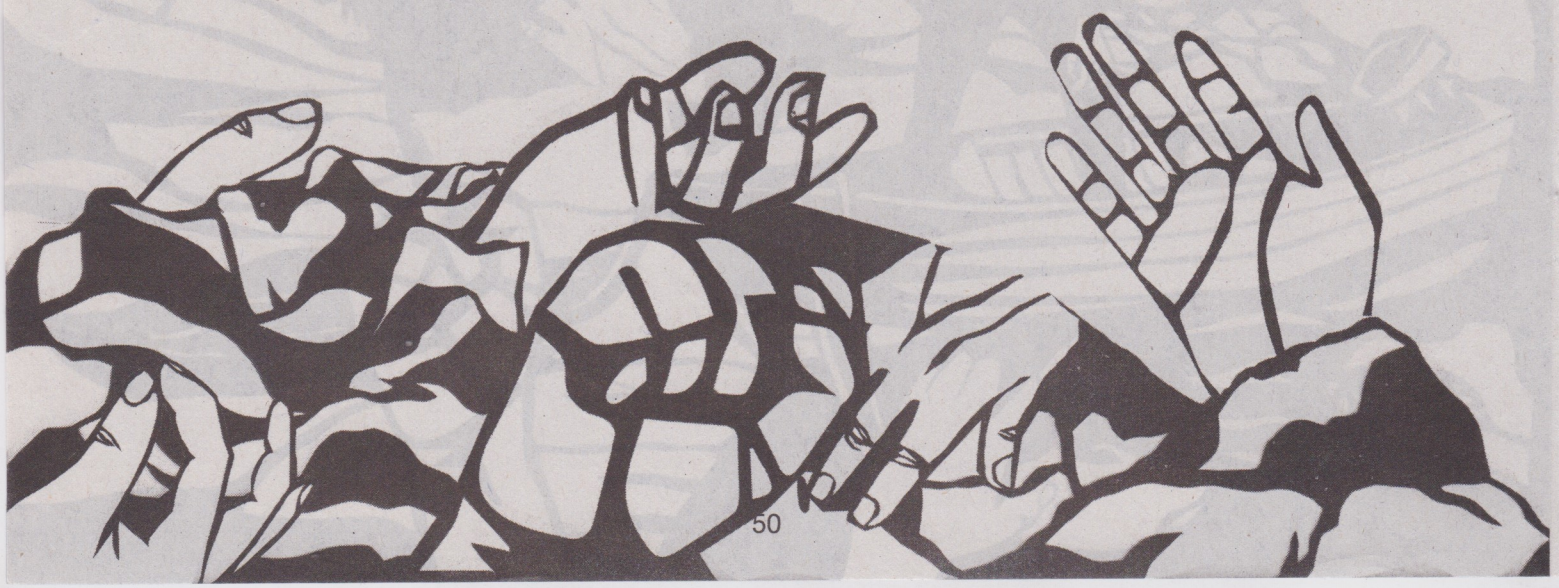
Megan: We have, though for me it's a little more indirectly. The song "Dead Parts" is about the importance of chosen family through punk, and a lot of that came from alienation from my mom, then later my dad's death. The act of finding a chosen family is a form of survival, a way to keep yourself alive. Both of my parents were mostly absent when I was growing up—my mom was an abusive jerk and things were complicated. They would often go on long "trips" and leave me with my sister, who had been kicked out of the house for being a gay punk, for months at a time and not leaving us resources for food etcetera. The upside was that as a little kid I got to hang around in the amazing queer punk SF scene during the '90s, in my sister's various neighborhoods and her own queer punk family! She was a good example.

When I was around thirteen my mom had an aneurysm, and although she physically survived, she lost all empathy (though I question how much she had to begin with) and she disappeared from my life. My dad, who I later reconciled with in the years following his divorce from my mom when I was fourteen, was disabled from polio and I was his main caretaker off and on, and when he died unexpectedly it was like a domino effect of conflicts. Exploring death and redefining life is really interesting to me.

John: "Null" was written in the aftermath of watching (and helping) my dad struggle with and die from a degenerative disease, Parkinson's. He refused to get into the standard program of "Stay positive! Buck up! Even if you don't beat this thing, you'll go out smiling!" or whatever. He was angry, pretty bitter, and totally ready to let it all go and just die already once it got to the acute phase—he had no desire to sit around watching TV anymore and not being able to move on his own. On the day he really began to let death take hold, he got into this kind of beautiful state where his determination to die, to go out *bang* like a candle (no afterlife for that old commie atheist) was almost inspirational; he seemed so happy to go, to just be done with the struggle. He saw way too much sadness and death and war in his life. I kind of shared his happiness, his sense of relief, then of course the grief set in. But there was some serious inspiration, some real liberation in the embrace of the inevitable, especially from someone whose life was characterized by a struggle for justice: he was a hardline anti-fascist, civil rights activist, and high school teacher.

MRR: That's really beautiful. Thank you for talking about that. And it's nice to have that inner look at those songs. I understand you've been working on some music videos as well, would you like to tell me about your process in this medium? How you know where to begin, where you get ideas, any artists or filmmakers that inform this work?

Megan: We used to just play with the camera and see what would happen, which was a lot of fun, but now we've gotten into methodically planning out and storyboarding our ideas and scheming various ways to make them happen. This last weekend, as you may remember because it happened in your beautifully creepy basement, we got a bunch of our friends together and had them tie us up with ropes while we were trying to play our song "Definition." The lyrics of the song are from *The Dispossessed*, talking about xenophobia tied to the



seductive naturalizing of capitalism and hypercompetition—hence the physical constraints. The hands doing the tying are a recurring theme throughout the album's artwork, alluding to anonymous but ever-present agents of control and, also, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. We didn't get to the fake blood part, and that's probably for the best. That video is a bit more loose than others that were mapped out frame by frame, but once we look at all the footage, we'll map out what we have, and throw it all together. In general, I think it's really important to choose one really good idea you're juiced on, and explore it in a million ways, instead of trying to fit too much in and never getting to the bottom of anything.

John: We usually obsess over certain eras of film and visual art and get inspired by them at different times, from album to album. This bleeds over into our visual art as well. I guess if there is any general tendency it is that we like a lot of "standard" stuff from the 1910s–1950s...

Megan: Dada.

John: Yeah, for sure, and our visual ideas have definitely been informed by a lot of well-known artists of ye olden tymes like Hannah Hoch, Luis Buñuel, Oscar Schlemmer, Grete Stern...Lately we've been watching a lot of Maya Deren. Also Target Video from the '80s by Jackie Sharp and Jill Hoffmann, especially Screamers footage, Mutants, Survival Research Labs. Bill Daniel videos, Lydia Lunch, DA!, Suicide, Mo-Dettes videos. Not super educated on film but always want to learn more, especially about newer stuff, Mikey Stoltz, Owen Cook are rad. We were lucky to collaborate with the super talented Shawnecee Schneider on the "Definition" video. Some other obvious visual stuff influences the hell out of us, too, like *Love and Rockets* comix. Our friend Miriam Klein Stahl, who we admire a lot as an artist, is doing the cover for the new album.

MRR: With the grim reality of spaces here in the Bay, do you feel inspired by other scenes and do you imagine we could have venues here like any place you've traveled?

Megan: The squat scene in Europe is pretty inspiring to us. We've played places that have been squats since the '60s, giving people housing, show spaces, bike repair, silkscreening studios, community kitchens, free stores, you name it. I've seen similar spaces in spirit in the US, but they aren't usually able to last very long. The US is very backwards in comparison, because the laws are written to benefit landowners and value property rights of an individual or corporation over the lives of people / general betterment of a community, usually making a lot of people homeless in the process. There's also some above ground DIY spaces I'm excited about, we'll be playing DIY Space For London in June and I've heard a lot of amazing things about it. Here in the Bay Area, it feels like things are pretty rough at the moment. A lot has changed in the Bay post-Ghost Ship, and likewise I think the reverberations are being felt across the country.

John: It is impossible to not bring up Ghost Ship here. The Bay actually has *so* many dynamic, driven people who have put incredible amounts of energy and time into creating viable spaces, often within their homes, and there were a ton of them. Everyone is just still wrecked and grieving from what happened in December, and a lot of things have changed in a lot of ways. Many of those dynamic people who put so much of themselves into creating and maintaining these spaces are dead, and many others are so scared of losing their homes that they are busy just trying to keep a low-profile. Neo-fascist, chickenshit internet trolls have called cops and fire marshals on DIY spaces all over the country in the name of crushing radicals, while reactionary city governments have been happily encouraged to bring the hammer down by luxury condo developers waiting to swoop in and engage in vulture / disaster capitalism. Worst of all is that this is not isolated or "new" but is just the latest chapter in a very long-running process that has already displaced incredible numbers of marginalized people, especially POC, from their homes and communities for years.

So, I guess what I am saying is that it is kind of hard to compare different places; like Megan said, the way the US value system is grounded in private property over human rights is really fucked up and backwards, vicious, colonialist. But there is a lot of resistance, always, and even (especially?) when times are darkest, in times when people who are far apart in some ways but are victimized by the same forces might finally strike out together on that common ground and change some things. I hope.

MRR: What tours are you planning this year?

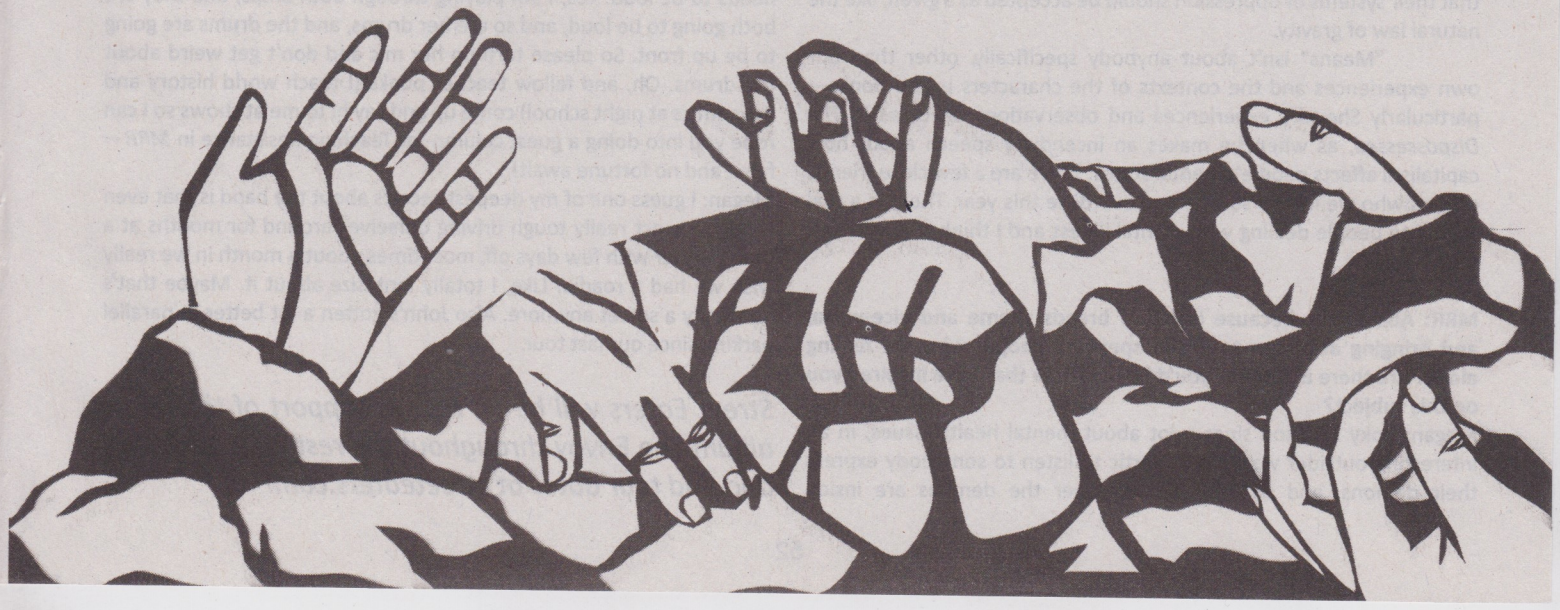
Megan: We're doing a month-long US and Canada tour in May, and a little over seven weeks in Europe in June / July.

John: We will probably hit up the Pacific Northwest later this summer, too. If anybody in Australia or South America wants us to come out, that'd be cool...

MRR: Tell me about the recent and coming releases for the label you run together, Nervous Intent.

Megan: Earlier this year we released our second *Frequency of the Truewave* comp which was a lot of fun. We also did a tape for Levitations from Berlin, and coming up we have an LP from Crooked Bangs in Austin, a tape from Kenny Kenny Oh Oh from Leipzig, and some other exciting stuff...Oh yeah, and the new Street Eaters LP coming out on Nervous Intent and Contraszt! Records in Europe too, duh.

MRR: Are all these band relationships you formed on tour or did you



seek them out because you liked them? How do you pick the releases you want to do?
Megan: We generally know the bands we put out pretty well before doing a release together. Making music / art we like and being decent people are definitely major criteria for wanting to work on a release with somebody. Even when all those stars align it's still hard sometimes because we only have so much time and money to put into releases, and we want to make sure we give each release we commit to our all.

MRR: I'd love to know more about the powerful lyrics of "Means." Who is the song about?
Megan: Means starts off with a few lines from *The Dispossessed*, talking about how people end up being owned by their material possessions in a capitalist society. I took that idea in a parallel direction to think about the mental states that society puts us into, questioning if these sicknesses are self-contained, mental illnesses, or if the real sickness is being imposed on us. The way I see it, the outside sicknesses are forces of oppression like capitalism, patriarchy, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, white supremacy...you get the idea. These can result in personal illnesses we try so hard to cope with or cure, and often get shamed for, like depression and drug addiction. I think those benefiting from the societal sicknesses would like us to believe it's our fault, and that their systems of oppression should be accepted as a given, like the natural law of gravity.

"Means" isn't about anybody specifically, other than our own experiences and the contexts of the characters in the books—particularly Shevek's experiences and observations on Urras in *The Dispossessed*, as when he makes an incendiary speech about how capitalism affects people's mental states. There are a few close friends of ours who we lost to suicide and overdose this year. There is a real stigma to people dealing with mental illness and I think talking about it is important.

MRR: Absolutely, because isolation breeds shame and vice-versa, and bringing attention to it can speak to people who are feeling alone. Are there any songs you'd like to share that have inspired you on this subject?
Megan: Roky Erickson sings a lot about mental health issues, in an interesting outsider way. It's cathartic to listen to somebody express their demons, and wrestle with whether the demons are inside or trying to bash their way in. I think in the past we'd been limited to mostly white men being given the space to express struggles with mental illness, and women were either silenced, dismissed, or sexualized. I think punk has both reinforced this and also blown the doors wide open and set the whole house on fire. There is so much powerful music happening now giving voice to people that need to be heard. Playing with Moor Mother this last fall was incredibly inspiring, watching Camae perform her cathartic art and making the whole crowd react in a way that's hard to describe, like she's bringing us into her world as a conduit.

MRR: That's really powerful. Are there any bands you'd ever do a collaboration with?
Megan: I think that would probably make it a different band, which isn't entirely off the table.
John: We just did a pretty fun Boys Next Door / Birthday Party cover band on Halloween with our friends Sami and Stevo. Maybe that will happen again...

MRR: What is something about your band that you'd like people to know?
John: Megan is the lead singer, not the backup singer, and her mic needs to be loud. Yes, I am playing through both amps, and they are both going to be loud, and so are her drums, and the drums are going to be up front. So please turn up her mic and don't get weird about the drums. Oh, and fellow teacher punks (I teach world history and economics at night school) come up and say hi to me at shows so I can rope you into doing a guest column for Teaching Resistance in *MRR*—fame and no fortune await!
Megan: I guess one of my deepest secrets about the band is that even though we act really tough driving ourselves around for months at a time on tour with few days off, most times about a month in we really wish we had a roadie. Like, I totally fantasize about it. Maybe that's not really a secret anymore. Also John's gotten a lot better at parallel parking since our last tour.

Street Eaters will be on tour in support of their new album The Envoy *throughout the rest of 2017. Listen and find tour dates at streeteaters.com.*

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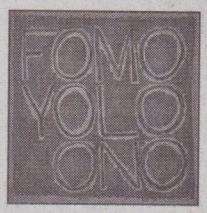

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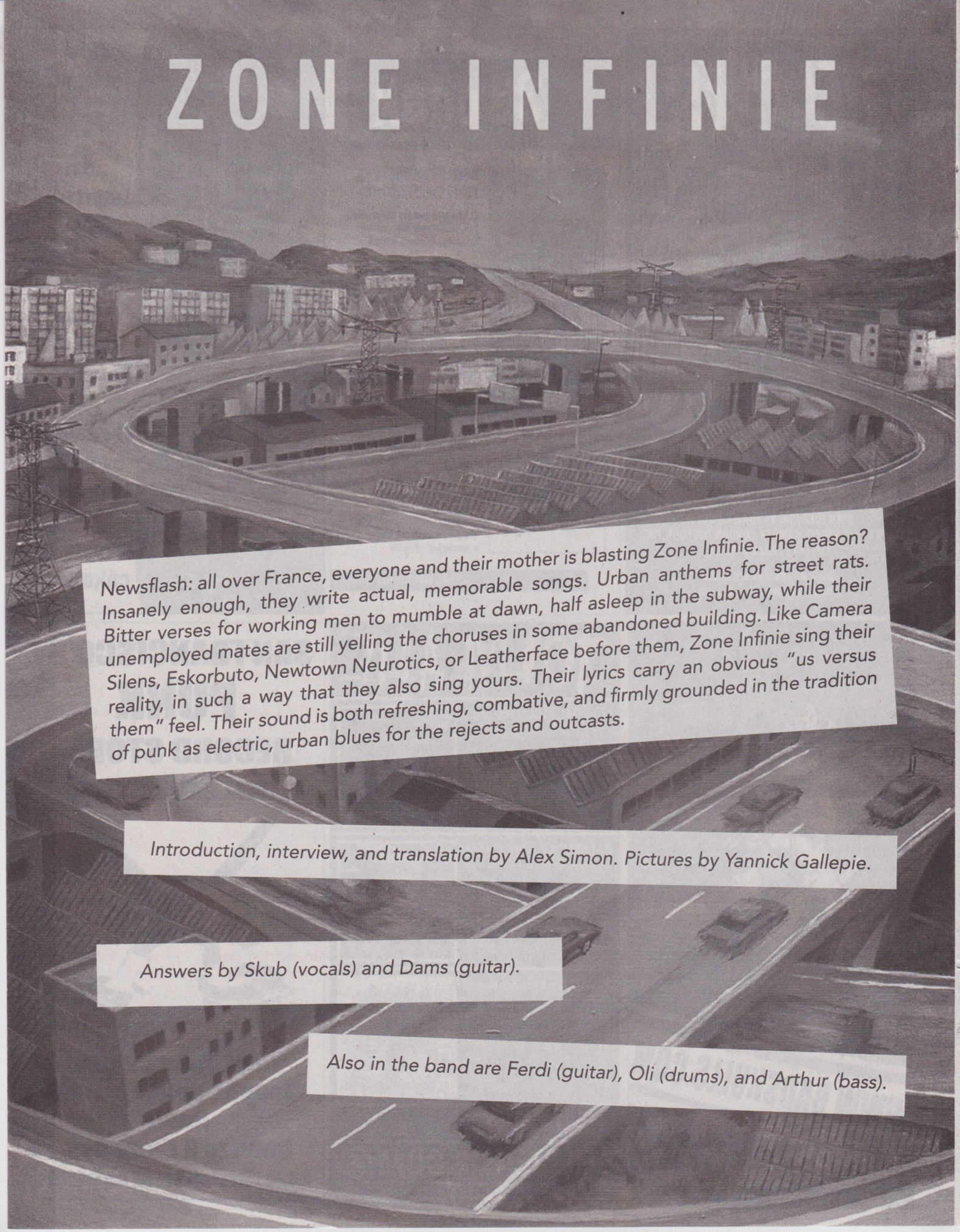

Newsflash: all over France, everyone and their mother is blasting Zone Infinie. The reason? Insanely enough, they write actual, memorable songs. Urban anthems for street rats. Bitter verses for working men to mumble at dawn, half asleep in the subway, while their unemployed mates are still yelling the choruses in some abandoned building. Like Camera Silens, Eskorbuto, Newtown Neurotics, or Leatherface before them, Zone Infinie sing their reality, in such a way that they also sing yours. Their lyrics carry an obvious "us versus them" feel. Their sound is both refreshing, combative, and firmly grounded in the tradition of punk as electric, urban blues for the rejects and outcasts.

Introduction, interview, and translation by Alex Simon. Pictures by Yannick Gallepie.

Answers by Skub (vocals) and Dams (guitar).

Also in the band are Ferdi (guitar), Oli (drums), and Arthur (bass).

MRR: Do you think music is shaped by our surroundings?
Skub: Yes, and when it stops being so, everything starts sounding the same. Same bands, same lyrics and behaviors...Thankfully, it's not exactly like this today, even if the internet tends to standardize everything, to create sub-genres, and to give birth to odd things, like bands singing about what's happening on the other side of the world, but not about their own lives. Things like this have always existed, I guess, but the "global culture" has accelerated this process. To me, punk rock should serve a purpose. Not necessarily a political one, but at least a social one. And for it to be relevant, it should mind its own reality.

MRR: So historically speaking, what are the specificities of punk in France ?
Skub: For one thing, before punk landed in France in the late '70s, there had never really been any rock bands around here, apart from some hippies playing prog-rock, maybe. Then, until the late '80s, I'd say French punk was more influenced by the English than by the Americans. Take the *Chaos en France* comps, for instance: a bunch of non-Parisians who, for the most part, copied the UK82 sound and look, with some serious bands and some goofy ones. The later are referred to as *le punk franchouillard*, which revolves around massive alcohol consumption, questionable humor, and songs about fighting. Even today, a portion of French punk bands are still influenced by this. Then, there was *le rock alternatif*, that so many people hate today. Here's a thing that's typically French, and that other countries never really cared for. To get into this, I think you have to be French, and understand a certain type of popular French culture. At the end of the day, it was more rock than punk, but even when the music wasn't so great, at least it was a positive youth movement. Politically speaking, it was influenced by the autonomists and the French hard left. In terms of popularity, it was a golden age for rock in France, which all dissolved in contradictions, as this movement was also full of hypocrites with inappropriate ambitions. But even if a lot of people hate it now, both musically and politically, I'd say that most young French punks have grown up listening to these bands. Bérurier Noir, Ludvig von 88, Les Rats, OTH.. To me, there's nothing to be ashamed of, here.

MRR: What about today?
Skub: Well, I started listening to punk in the '00s. Today I'm 28, and I think one of the characteristics of the current French punk scene is that it's rather small, so it feels like one big family. You get to know all the activists really fast. Also, rap culture is way more widespread than rock culture around here. The working class doesn't listen to rock, but to hip-hop. And the other classes too. As a result, I think to be a punk in France, to be deeply involved in punk, is to be way more marginalized than in England, Germany, Spain, or Scandinavia. Compared to these countries, punk is less socially accepted here, so people tend to open themselves to other things as well, which is a good thing. "Scenes" tend to bore me anyway.

MRR: Could Zone Infinie have sounded the same in another country ?
Dams: I'd say the "Zone Infinie sound" might be shaped by a geographic and economic reality, but *not* by a feeling of belonging to a "country" in the cultural sense. I wasn't a member at the very beginning, I just happened to be hanging out in the squat where most of them lived, and one day I heard a band practice (they had two songs, "Les Failles" and "Reaction," I think), and I got instantly hooked, so I joined them. What's important is that we all come from old working class cities, full of industrial wastelands, gangrened by unemployment, where life isn't easy, and I think you can hear this in our music and lyrics. That's why I got the "concept" on first listen...Plus the fact I knew what characters these guys were, of course!

I don't think our music and lyrics have anything to do with a "country" in the geographical sense, but more with a given situation at a given time, considering we all grew up in different cities, but followed similar economical and cultural paths. This is summed up pretty well in our eponymous song. *"We were born in a cemetery, with not much to do, other than staring at zombies."* It shaped our understanding of the world, and you can feel it in our music. We often get compared to Traitre and Syndrome 81, two current French bands who also come from economically devastated zones, and I don't think that's a coincidence. We're a very urban band.
Skub: I think Zone Infinie is part of a certain tradition of French punk, but we also try to move things forward a bit. To us, singing in French is really important. People need to understand the lyrics. They're a unifying factor. There are other bands like us in France, and probably in other countries... After all, what we're talking about is just the blues of post-industrial cities. It's about urban loneliness ; it exists everywhere.

MRR: You guys always get compared to French bands (Camera Silens comes to mind), but I feel like your influences are more varied.
Skub: Yeah, Camera Silens is great, but I get a bit tired of the *Chaos en France* comparison. I like these bands and always will, but I haven't really listened to them since my late teenage years. The French band I've played the most in recent years is Les Thugs. But no, our influences aren't limited to French bands. Leatherface, for instance, is one of the best bands ever, with this melancholic feel of devastated seaside city, something for sensitive hooligans! Then Newtown Neurotics, which makes you want to turn into a revolutionary trade unionist, plus Joy Division, and the best band of the '00s, No Hope for the Kids. A few years ago I was way into classic Spanish bands, like Eskorbuto and RIP, and I think you can still hear this in our sound. These days I listen to *Daydream Nation* by Sonic Youth quite often, I know it's old news for a lot of people, but I'm discovering it, and I think it's a great record. I used to be into Criminal Damage, but nowadays I find them a bit fake, especially considering the current "Oi! revival," and the fact that a few years back no one gave a flying fuck about this kind of music. I could be wrong, since I don't understand their lyrics...Anyway, their first album was great, the others just sound the same to me.
Dams: Like I said, when I joined the band, they already had a few songs, and yeah, the Camera Silens-influenced bass playing definitely played a role in me joining. But not as much as the slight, melodic Leatherface influence. At the time I was mostly listening to heavy / dark stuff, like Neurosis or Cathedral, and a lot of D-beat, country music, and rock'n'roll. Completely unrelated music for the most part. A lot of people thought it was crazy that I was joining a punk rock band. But my punk influences are rather similar to those of the other members, so to me playing this type of music feels logical. I just don't like being compared to those *Chaos en France* bands, because sure there were a few good bands on these comps, but that's far from being what I listen to the most, and even more importantly, their lyrics usually suck really bad. Plus I don't want to sound pretentious, but I think our sound is more subtle than theirs. We play music for sensitive hooligans, ha!

MRR: What older French bands do you like, then ?

Skub: Camera Silens and La Souris Déglinguée, because they are fucking legends. Les Thugs, who I love for their sobriety, creativity, and integrity. Les Rats, for their suburban loser / punk rocker feel, people like us in a way, who wrote beautiful lines like "*I wanted to be a terrorist / I don't even know if I'll end up a gas-station clerk.*" And Les Brigades, a forgotten band who was really tight, and kind of an archetype of '80s autonomists / punk rockers. Sure, English-speaking folks would probably laugh at their accent, but to me they're an important band, because they make you want to believe and create havoc.

Dams: Camera Silens, early Bérurier Noir (when they wore black jackets and sung about psychiatric suicide, *not* when they became a circus band), No Class, Gégène et les N* (*Longwy vivra!*), Vomit Yourself, Coche Bomba, some songs by Parabellum and Les Cadavres, the song "Les conseils" by Al Kapott…And in another style, the first three Massacra albums are fabulous.

MRR: What about your trajectories? Since you all come from different cities, how did you all meet ?

Skub: I met Raf (bassist in the first lineup) in secondary school. We kinda were the two only punk rockers in some small towns in the Saint-Etienne area. Then we met a few other punks, so we moved to the city and did what we had to do. We started a band called Toujours Rien, which is very dear to me, but ended too soon. I met Dams in a squat in Saint-Etienne, about ten years ago. We got along really quick, probably because we came from the same kinda cities, the aforementioned post-industrial cities where people speak with a distinctive accent. But the idea for this band came while talking with Ferdi, in a working-class bar in the 7th district of Lyon. Ferdi was a friend, but we hadn't seen each other for a while. At the time I played a lot of pinball, and this fucker was pretty good at it ! And with a rock'n'roll style to boot. We wanted to start another band, so we gathered a team. At the beginning, our drummer was Thomas Barieux *(Ed. – drummer for countless bands from Lyon, including Lexomyl and Coche Bomba)*, which was an obvious choice since we were into the same kind of music, but then life got on the way, and we had to find another drummer, so Oli joined us *(Ed. – member of countless French bands, including Death to Pigs and Strong as Ten)*, and we got along really well.

Dams: For years I was an active member of the Nancy Blackout Brigade (gig collective and label in the Lorraine area), then after squatting everywhere I could in Nancy, I left the northeast of France to go squat in Saint-Etienne. Then I moved to Grenoble, where I started to play in a crustcore band (Death Reign), then I left that city for Lyon, to play in Zone Infinie. I've known Skub and Raf for ten years. I was a fan of their old band Toujours Rien (you can see me in the audience on their demo back cover), and a mutual friend helped us connect (thank you, Princess Chaos). I met Ferdi during some parties, a little before joining the band, and we got along really well too. As for Oli, we've known each other for more than twenty years, but we hadn't seen each other in a while. Back then, if someone had told me we would play together in a punk-rock band when we would be forty, I would have never believed it. Hell yeah!

MRR: You always say the band is from Saint-Etienne, yet most of the members spend most of their time in Lyon. The band even started here. Why don't you write "Punk from Lyon" on your posters? Would that sound too bourgeois? For foreign readers, could you explain the difference between the two cities?

Skub: Saint-Etienne is the post-industrial city where I grew up and lived a lot of good and bad stuff, parties as much as tragedies. The city was well-known for its DIY punk scene in the '00s, but not so much nowadays. Saint-Etienne is a city I'm gonna leave, and when that's gonna happen, it's gonna be like saying farewell to an ex-girlfriend I couldn't save from her drug abuse. Lyon is a bigger, richer city, with more opportunities and less chances of things ending up badly, but it will never

have the authenticity of Saint-Etienne, this old punk woman with a swollen face. But yeah, one of these days we'll have to write Lyon on those posters.
Dams: I feel closer to the Saint-Etienne spirit, since I grew up in a similar city (Longwy), with a similar history... And I'm not fond of the atmosphere in Lyon, even if I have some good friends there. Hi, by the way ! You know who you are...

MRR: The band was born in the Rock'n'roll Vengeance, a squat in Lyon, where some of you lived and practiced. Now that a few years have passed, what memories would you like to share about this place? I think it was different from other squats in Lyon. Maybe some would say it was less political, but I think that'd be too simplistic.
Skub: Those years in the Rock'n'roll Vengeance were the best of my life, but there were also some rather tough moments. It's so stupid sometimes, the way things feel doomed...When we started this place, we were just a bunch of young, irreverent jerks, with a love for punk music. We never pretended to be revolutionaries, but at least we lived by our own rules. It's crazy, the amount of situations you can create just by breaking two windows. Like I said when it started, it was only two punk rockers with the help of some friends. And when it ended, it was a fucking mess. Many different people were living and hanging there: Romany families, marginal rockers, "zonards," political people, even some people into karma and stuff like that. A lot of fights, but also a lot of kindness. Sometimes the chaos was too much, it was hard to deal with, but to be frank, I think we just didn't want to deal with it. In a way, we just wanted to let it be. Not very pragmatic, maybe, but at least the spirit always stayed rock'n'roll, even as people came and went. We didn't want to be bamboozled by people talking about various "isms." We just went out and hung out in the local bars, where we were neither marginals, nor integrated. Our goal wasn't to "bring back a social life to the neighborhood," nor to "educate people"; we just enjoyed the neighborhood for what it was, one of the last working class area in Lyon. So we'd go to the bar, hang out by the river...Some squats play a role in the gentrification of their neighborhoods, but I don't think we did that. Some shows were amazing. After the bands played, the afterparties looked like a self-governing PMU *(Ed. – working-class bars where people bet on horse races)*, for the people who couldn't get drunk anywhere else. And I'll say it again: the variety of people was unbelievable. For instance, I fondly remember the night where the Algerian hardcore band Demokhratia played with Crimen from Mexico. Upstairs, there was a some young Romany guys partying, downstairs our bar felt like a PMU, and that night, you could feel the international vibe, and there weren't many students either...Anyway, I'll always be proud that Zone Infinie started there, in a squat, in our house next to the belt highway...And I think the difference with a lot of other French squats is that we didn't really have any aims, other than being more free.
Dams: I only lived in this squat for a few months, but I have good memories anyway. And bad ones, too...But what's for sure is that I wouldn't have moved to Lyon if it wasn't for that squat that was so "different." During the few months I lived in Lyon, I didn't even really leave this neighborhood. To ALL my friends from the Rock'n'Roll Vengance: thanks for everything !

MRR: In general, I think the atmosphere at gigs in France is different from other countries. When I used to travel, every time I was at a gig in another country, I'd spend the night complaining I was missing French shows.
Skub: Well, punk in France is a small community, where you're quickly connected with everyone else, and from one city to another, gig places can be completely different. What's cool in France is that most people you meet at shows are activists. To the point where simple consumers are almost missing sometimes! And maybe there are less posers here than in other countries. Hey, I said *maybe*... But the downside is that the atmosphere at gigs isn't always very fun. And there was a time where the French scene painfully lacked identity. People would just mimic their Spanish, English, German or American models... But lately, I think it's getting better, with bands like Traitre, Douche Froide or Pervers & Truands, who all benefit from strong identities.
Dams: To me what's missing from shows in France is danger! And spontaneity, too. Everything's really quiet, most of the time. People just clap their hands, and everyone looks the same. I have to admit I get bored at shows these days, so I don't go as much as I used to. It's true that most people at shows are all very involved, enthusiastic fans, which is a good thing, but we also need new people to ensure continuity and take the helm. Punk in France is for fanatics, by fanatics, and I think the downside is that it leaves very little room for new, young people. It feels like young punks have to act like they're 40 years old if they want to be respected. Be quiet, etc... But fuck, now it's their turn, we should let them live! And that's all I can say, because in the last years I haven't travelled much, so I can't really compare to other places. I went to a few foreign cities to play shows, sure, but it's hard to have an opinion on a place when you just stay for a day.

MRR: What cities do you like the most in Europe ?
Skub: I like Barcelona, but the more time passes, the more I'd rather hang out in the streets than go to shows when I'm there. But still some great bands, of course. I like Paris too. Interesting audiences, even if there aren't many squats. And no, the Parisian audience isn't only made up of bobos! *(Ed. – bobo = bohemian bourgeois, i.e. privileged / rich people, gentrifying neighborhoods while trying to act "alternative" on the weekends)*. I feel like the Parisian scene has its own personality, and I like it a lot, even if it's pretty small considering the size of the city.
MRR: In capitals like Paris, London, Barcelona, or Berlin, its seems the audience at DIY punk gigs consists more and more of privileged people, both economically and socially. Some complain that the marginal dimension of punk is slowly disappearing from these places.
Skub: It's pretty simple, big cities are being gentrified, so the audience at gigs is being gentrified too. It's a shame, as it makes things way less exciting. Berlin's alright, I guess, but to me the people there seem to come from the future, like in that TV show *Tracks. (Ed. – French / German show about so-called alternative & avant-garde music)*. I prefer Leipzig, even if it's also full of squats in gentrified neighborhoods, with tons of bobos sporting their bun hairstyles, and everything feels so pacified, like social peace has been bought...Which is sad, considering that bobos should be our number one enemies. Anyway, pacification and commodification of counter-cultures, with gentrification as the result, isn't anything new.
Dams: Bobos and their gentrification are our true ennemies. And here they stand, so close to us! So let's take out our brass knuckles and cut-throat razors, and let off steam on that dead meat! *[sardonic laugh]* OK, I'm exaggerating, but not so much. These people are the plague, they neither belong in punk nor in our cities.

MRR: It feels like you guys are very attached to the idea of punk as a place

for rejects and outcasts. Right?

Skub: Let's say when you come from the kind of places we do, half suburb half countryside, bumfuck nowhere type places, you don't meet many punks. You know two or three of them, if you're lucky, and you're really isolated. But the result is that you're more proud of what you are. You don't feel like a sheep, it's you and your friends against the world, and this feeling is a first experience of marginality. After this phase, the first punks I met in "real cities" were very messy people: fighters, dropouts, young and old street people, a lot of whom directly came from the Saint-Etienne lumpen-proletariat. Young runaways, mean bums, violent and in-your-face... At the time I wasn't as aggressive as them, but I still did feel a lot of hate. And I didn't like dogs very much, and they all had them...But at the same time, I was fascinated by these people, and I so didn't fit in anywhere else that I *had to* be a punk or nothing. So I started going to their shows, which took place in a very messy bar, a real dive, owned by old rejects.

They booked shows where bands usually weren't very good, but for a seventeen-year-old kid in Saint-Etienne, it was crazy. You'd enter this place and see these big sinister guys with their suspicious-looking faces. A lot of drug-addicts, strange ideas and fights. All of a sudden, you were part of this marginal world. With time, some of these people became my friends. Some of them helped me a lot, some lumpen people and some not, you know, the people we call *keupons (Ed. – slang for gutterpunk)*. And in other parts of the cities lived the anarcho-punks, who were way more relaxed but who came from the same social classes we did, and who were also very interesting people. Some of them lived in Izmir, a squatted kebab house, and they were linked to La France Pue *(Ed. – France Stinks, a gig collective who's booked more than 300 punk shows and counting)*, and in the end, these people were also marginals and rejects. Anarchist rejects. And they knew the aforementioned people, and sometimes they hung out together, sometimes they fought, sometimes they organized things together...It was punk in a nutshell, and to me, these people were outcasts, and I had felt like an outcast for my whole life, so in a way, it was like I had finally found home. But punk isn't limited to this. It's a mix of different backgrounds, and it should stay this way. People from different social classes, with different opinions and different sensitivities, all hanging out and trying to build things together. I never judge people based on their social background or their "punk résumé," but I have to admit that sometimes I'm nostalgic of a few things...And the day punk rock with only be filled with graphic designers riding fixed gear bikes, it will be time for me to leave.

Dams: Yeah, I'm from the old guard—in my time it was by the outcasts, for the outcasts. And it should stay like this. Nowadays, everything has gotten so clean, it feels like the politically correct dogmas have won in the punk scene. If you dance a bit too hard, or if you're a bit too drunk, or if you speak a bit too loud, it's almost like you should leave the gig. But hey, I'm not saying I'm a fan of the Exploited crowd, with all their broken glass, kicks in the pit, beer-filled mohawks, "fart in your face cause you stepped on my dog Ketamine," but there has to be a middle ground...In Saint-Etienne, it's OK, it's not as bad as in Grenoble, a city that's like a virus. I can't stand their PC mentality, with people clapping during our songs when they pretend they don't see you in the streets because you live in the wrong place...Or maybe it's just me, old and bitter! In Portugal, I think punks are more spontaneous, more varied too, it's still a street culture over there. People drink in the streets, eat in the streets...It's pretty messy, it feels alive. Here's my message to anarcho-sensitive people: stop taking yourselves so seriously...

MRR: In Lyon, I've rarely seen as many people dance and sing along as during a Zone Infinie gig.

Skub: What I like about it is that even our friends' mom like the band. I'm really happy that a lot of different people recognize themselves in our band. And not just punk rockers... I'm happy to see some skinheads upfront, next to some art-students, autonomists, high school kids, old timers, bums, all kinds of junkies, activists, squatters, computer engineers, civil servants and queers all singing the lyrics as one. I don't know, but I think we simply describe a reality that speaks to a lot of people. In my lyrics, I'm not trying to convince anyone of anything. I'm just telling stories.

Dams: My nine and seven-year-old nephews, who are fans of Kenji and Maître Gims *(Ed. – mainstream French hip-hop singers)*, love our song "Les Failles," and even my mom finally gets what I'm doing. Great, right ?

MRR: When I first heard that song, I told myself it was some kind of autonomist anthem. Are you familiar with the "autonomist movement", the Situationist International, *The Coming Insurrection*, Tiqqun, this kind of stuff? What loopholes or fissures are you talking about in the song ?

Skub: I'm interested in the Situationist International, although I don't think I get it all, but I try to read as much as possible on the subject. I'm an adept of the dérive when I'm tripping on LSD, but hey, that doesn't make me a situationist...I had the idea for this song one winter morning, while crossing the belt highway that separated my squat from the rest of the city. It's about squatting, and resourcefulness in general. It's about the fact that sometimes, you wanna become some kind of urban ninja, you know, a "shadow man," like in the song by Lunatic *(Ed. – French hip-hop band)*. It's about this burning desire to see this old world fall apart, but since we're not united enough to just destroy it like that, well, we have to look for "loopholes" or "fissures." For some people, it will mean squatting. For others, it will mean stealing, fighting, lying to the Unemployment Office. Some work, other grow vegetables, other go to demonstrations high on mushrooms. Some build, other destroy. Some live in dark suburbs, other in the "zone" and other pretend to be model citizens while secretly stealing from their bosses, or plotting against their oppressors. For some, it only means not being jerks, which is already something. And...well, I could go on, but you have to let poetry speak for itself.

MRR: Your record cover was painted by Ivan Brun. Last year, when submitting his comic for the art issue of *MRR*, he mentioned his enthusiasm sharing these pages with new punk artists. He said that, given the current state of the world, with things like ISIS, global warming, social network-induced isolation, mass-murders and the far-right making a global comeback, subjects weren't lacking. When he received the mag, he must have been disappointed: most of the comics were either centered on the punk lifestyle, music, or personal politics. Should punk have a broader social role, or be focused on itself?

Skub: Well, I would agree with uncle Ivan. That's why I haven't read many zines lately. People are more and more self-centered. Some have interesting things to say, but others should just tell it all to a shrink or their mates at the bar...But the problem is, they don't even go to bars anymore. I haven't seen the comics you're talking about, but yeah, punk should be about keeping our eyes wide open, and

that's what I like about Ivan's drawings. They're very connected to reality. Anyway, I'm less and less interested in the punk "scene"... Back in the days it was called a movement, not a scene, if you know what I mean.

MRR: In your eponymous song, when you say *"We were born in a France that belonged to the past"* are you talking about something like the downfall of the French hegemony?

Skub: It's about the same old thing. Coming from places like Rive-de-Gier, Saint-Chamond, Saint-Etienne, these French cities where people used to be proud of their industry, proud of their expertise, but then everything fell apart, and suddenly, no one gave a fuck about these cities. It's as if they were erased from the map... So no, I don't care about the "downfall of France." I'm not a patriot. What I care about is when I see forsaken people stuck in shitholes where nothing will ever happen again, and where people don't go out anymore.

Dams: Where I come from, hegemony has been a thing of the past for a long time. I'm used to it. It's part of my loser life, and the more things are screwed up, the more I find it interesting. When the shit hits the fan, we'll see theory *not* turning into action. When confronted with reality, a lot of so-called revolutionaries will fall down really hard.

MRR: What current French bands would you recommend ?

Skub: Traitre, which are our cousins from Lille. Syndrome 81, because they can play. Litovsk, because they're our friends. Douche Froide, because they sound unique. Noir Boy George, because it's a great guy playing great music, and people who try to copy him always fail. Pervers & Truands, because they're the last grunge band in France. Zero Gain, because Saint-Etienne! And the current scene in Lyon is pretty good, with bands like Litige or Cascarrabias...Thinking about it, it's been years the French scene hasn't been as good as now.

Dams: Human Compost, a great crust-metal band. Traitre, some rather unique punk / Oi! Chestnut Road, a Leatherface-influenced band.

MRR: Upcoming plans ? Second album, U.S tour, world domination?

Skub: Well, first we need to keep on playing. Release a new album, which will sound a bit different. Touring America would be great, but first there should be some interest for us over there, which is not a given, especially considering we sing in French. Regardless, we should tour more in France first. We haven't done it so much, and nowadays it seems French bands go more and more on international tours (globalization, always...), as if France wasn't interesting to them. But I think there are a lot of things to be done here, especially given the current rotten political atmosphere. A lot of things to say about reality...Anyway, the main thing I hope is that we all stay friends in this band, because despite our flaws and our run of bad luck, I don't want to play with *musicians*, I want to keep on playing with *friends*.

The first ZONE INFINIE album has just been repressed. Get it from Maloka, Une vie pour rien or Anyway Records. Listen at zoneinfinie.bandcamp.com.

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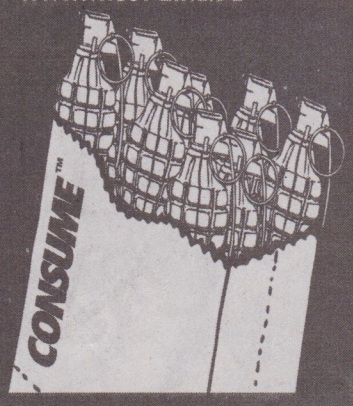

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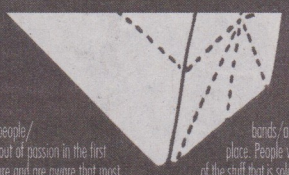
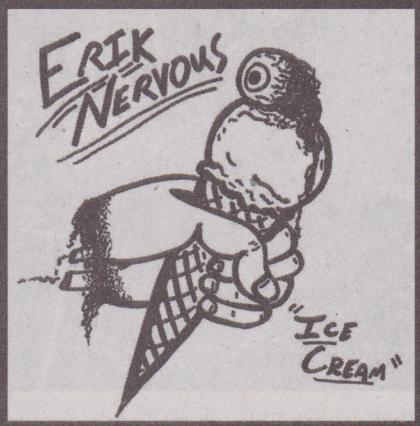
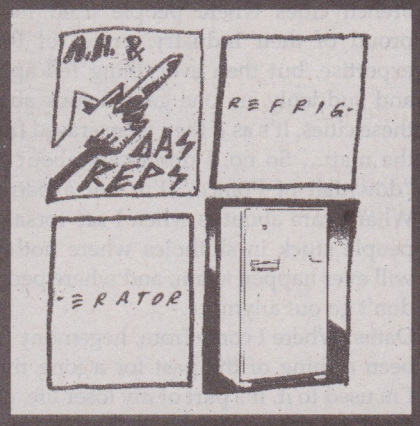


We like to meet people/ bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

"NEVER MIND WHAT THEY'RE SELLING- IT'S WHAT YOU ARE BUYING"

TOTAL PUNK
OUR JUNK'S BETTER THAN YOUR JUNK





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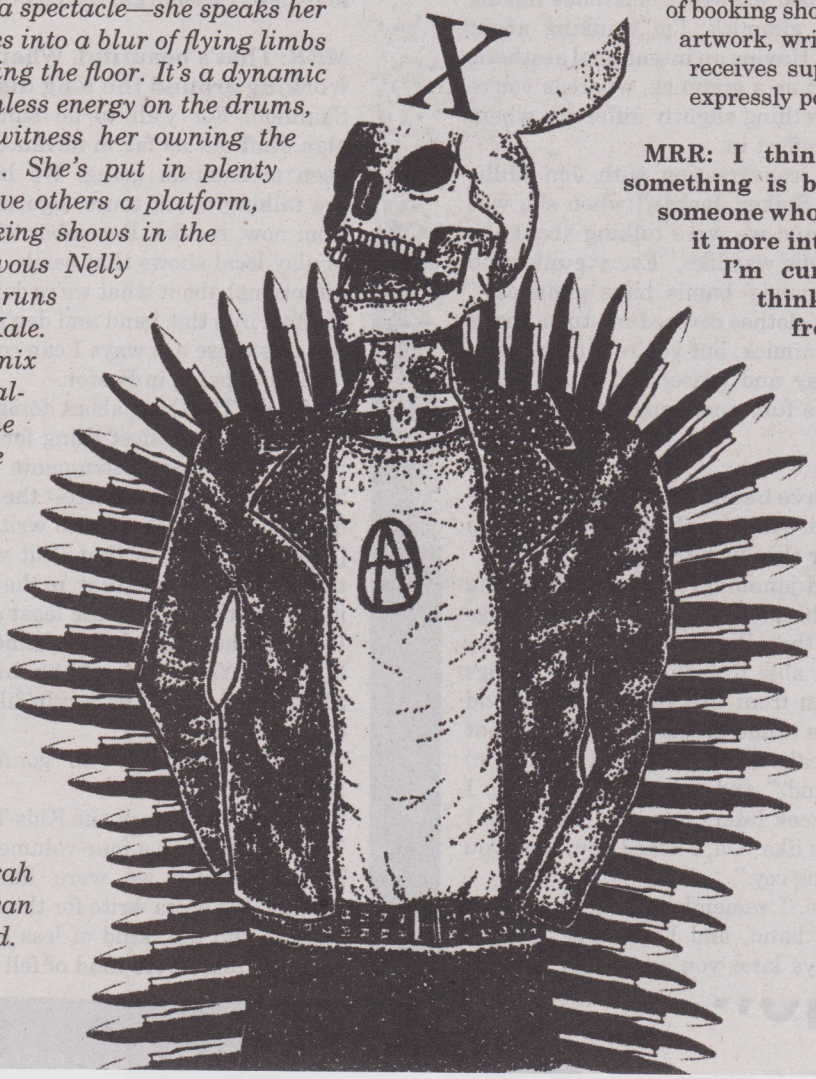
PANDEMIX

From the get-go, Pandemix's output has been fueled by a collective drive to get as much shit done as possible as soon as possible. This in conjunction with lots of connections outside of Boston served as catalysts for them to escape the DIY drought in Boston and shake up someone else's city over the last several months. In July of last year the band released their five-song demo Pathological Culture *on cassette and on bandcamp, and recording for their upcoming full-length occurred over the course of a weekend in Western Mass in early December, preceded by a banger of a house show the night before in the middle of the woods. Everything came to a crash finish in the tail end of 2016 to prepare for the unavoidable lull in activity that comes with your lead singer moving to the Midwest.*

Shannon (vocals), Tom (bass), Matthew (guitar), and Ryan (drums) comprise the band, and it's no one's first rodeo. Everyone in Pandemix contributes to the songwriting and gruntwork, album art is a shared effort between Tom's classic collaging and Shannon's pointillism, and everyone is functional punk outside of the band in current and past endeavors. In a scene drenched in hardcore and D-beat it's refreshing that somebody decided to give peace punk a chance. Watching Shannon do her vocal thing live is a spectacle—she speaks her piece and then explodes into a blur of flying limbs and cowboy boots hitting the floor. It's a dynamic translation of her ruthless energy on the drums, and it's exciting to witness her owning the frontwoman platform. She's put in plenty of work in punk to give others a platform, whether through booking shows in the past or through Nervous Nelly Records, which she runs with her partner Kale. Lyrically, Pandemix zero in on the medical-industrial complex, the implication of white people in the violence against black people, the extent to which a consumerist society fucks with our internal dialogue. Scale Models of Atrocities *will drop sometime this year.*

Interview by Sarah Ruggiero. Photos by Ryan Stanis. Art by the band.



MRR: You guys play a lot of shows outside of Boston, and you had shows in New York and Western Mass before you had a local one. It seems like you've got plenty of connections out of town, but does it make a difference to know some solid people are going to be [at a show] versus going to show and having no idea who any of the people are?

Matthew: I think there's something really nice about going into a space where you don't know anyone, and it's new, and you have no idea whether the show's going to be good or bad, and then it's a phenomenal show, and it's a bunch of people you've never met coming up to you being really friendly. We played that show in Maine...I knew Vic, who set it up. We played a house called Trash Mansion. We didn't know any of the other bands, and it was a great show. Sold a lot of stuff, people were excited. I was a really good time. I think I prefer that over shows with all your friends.

Shannon: I feel like in Western Mass there are a lot of women setting up shows, and they're more likely to book a lot of bands with women on a show. And women are more likely to come out to a show, so that's something that I consider a key component to a good show. I think a good way to operate as a political band within your community or whatever is to be very intentional about who is getting the opportunities created by your band; who is getting to be engaged in the form of booking shows, creating commissioned artwork, writing zines, whatever—who receives support or encouragement is expressly political.

MRR: I think you can tell when something is booked by a woman or someone who's more aware of making it more intentional [of an event]... I'm curious about what you think about the term "female-fronted." Is it necessary or overused? Does it mean anything?

Shannon: I don't feel it's a particularly useful way to categorize bands or advertise bands. I do think, absolutely, women being in the bands playing makes more women come out to shows, which is a good thing. You can call a band feminist and it's kind of a code word for the same thing. I feel like it's a little passé to be that outwardly objectifying.

Matthew: I feel like I saw that term four years ago a lot.

Ryan: I feel like that happens on flyers for places with smaller scenes and less shows. It's not exactly a double-edged thing, 'cause that implies two equal edges, but two very different edges...I've been on tour and seen flyers for shows that I will be playing where I don't know any of the bands, where [my former band] Curmudgeon will be called "female-fronted thrash punk." Maybe other people looking at that flyer will be more excited to go to this show. Where the other edge is definitely, this feels really tokenizing and missing the point. It's not about making a gimmick out of what the gender-makeup of the band is. It's annoying and encouraging, but mostly annoying.
Shannon: I've thought about that in terms of—this hasn't happened, but it certainly could if we're playing smaller cities or playing through people who don't know us—if we're described as "trans-fronted-whatever," "queer-fronted-whatever." Visibility is cool and can bring people out who don't know, but it's also tokenizing. Plus, I don't feel like we really aestheticize those things as much as some other bands do, so I'm conflicted about the possibility of other people pushing it to the forefront. So I don't think there's an easy answer.

MRR: What else is gimmicky to you in punk?
Ryan: Everything. I'm not trying to hate by saying everything. I love 'em a lot of the time when they don't matter. Like when you sound like Marilyn Manson and look like Marilyn Manson, that's sick. That's a gimmick. Sorry, was that a bad answer?
Shannon: No, that was a good answer. Sometimes having a theme can seem like a gimmick. I'm thinking about [Matthew's band] Disipline. Having an intentional aesthetic that stands out can be read as a gimmick, whereas you're just putting effort into something slightly different, where other people aren't putting effort in.
Matthew: I was having a conversation with Jen Millis [of St. Ripper, Who Killed Spikey Jacket?] when she was playing bass in Disipline, and we were talking about the gimmick of Disipline, and she was like, "Every punk band has a gimmick. All our friends' bands have gimmicks." Like, D-beat warrior, black clothes covered in studs, that's a gimmick. It's a serious gimmick, but you're intentionally making yourself look a way and presenting that. That's what I like about punk. It's fun, and I enjoy the gimmick side of it.

MRR: I know you guys have been in a million bands—some of them with each other!—already. What was the specific intention for this band?
Ryan: Me and Tom started jamming, thinking we wanna do a darkish peace punk thing, and the first couple songs we came up with were like that. We thought, who will play guitar in this who will be able to bring these two songs out big time? And, who can front this that doesn't sound forgettable? We figured this would probably be a band that would be all about the vocals. I think I asked [Shannon] "Who should front this band?" and you were like, "Oh, I don't know." And then a week later, you were like "Can I front this band?" And I was like "Oh, I asked you," and you were like, "Yeah, I was being coy."
Shannon: That's very close. I remember it as, you asked me who should front this band, and I was like "I don't know." And then a few days later you were like, "Do you wanna front this band?" We remember the agency on different sides, but I definitely said I was being coy... A big thing for me with doing this band is, I decided five years ago that I wasn't gonna start bands without other women in them. This is the first one that I have since deciding that, and I already hung out with all of these boys anyway. And I really wanted to be the center of attention instead of just being the drummer. The rules were meant to be broken, you know?

MRR: You have a cool energy on stage, you're jumpin' and boppin' around.
Shannon: Thanks. What else do you like about me?

MRR: Do you have vocalists who you admire?
Shannon: Yeah, it feels almost too obvious to say Vi Subversa from Poison Girls, but I definitely thought about that band a lot when we were starting this band. A lot of classic punk stuff, I feel like there was a lot more pageantry than bands do now. Doc Dart from the Crucifucks is one of my favorite vocalists, and I think that stuff has a sense of humor and a sense of drama. I just try and have fun, and I usually don't think I'm gonna be able to finish a set at some point during the set. I feel like I don't look "cool." I'm freakin' out, but I'm a sweaty fucking mess. I fall over all the time.

MRR: You're moving soon.
Shannon: I'm moving to Pittsburgh...for love.
Matthew: Pittsburgh, the city of love.

MRR: That's beautiful. What's the band plan for working around the long distance?
Shannon: For y'all to do shit without me and to plan stuff out as far in advance as we can to kind of keep momentum going. We have records planned, are talking about tours, figuring shit out for a year from now, so like, December 2017. We won't be able to play local shows that easily, but I feel like if we're intentional about what we're doing...I've put a real lot of effort into this band and don't want it to dissipate. I feel like there are ways I can continue to put labor in it without being in Boston.
Matthew: The thing about doing a band long distance, I feel like the easiest thing for us to do is—as three people who play instruments being here and then Shannon being elsewhere-- the easiest thing to do in my mind would be just to write new stuff, and mail [Shannon] mp3s of that. But we just wrote a whole thing, and I feel like that, in the trajectory of our band, is a thing that makes the least amount of sense.
Ryan: It should be chill out time.
Matthew: Yeah, it should be chill out time.
Shannon: It should be fuckin' like, play-these-songs-a-bunch-live-time.
Tom: I think we're all gonna work on our solo records.
Matthew: Big Tom & the Kids Table.
Tom: Released in a four-volume set.
Ryan: Because we were like, "Damn, Shannon's moving. We gotta write for this record and record this record," the fun, kind of less good uses of time, like learning fun covers kind of fell by the wayside. And I

feel like once Shannon moves and we have instrumental band practice, me and Tom, at least, have talked about, "Let's work on that fun cover."

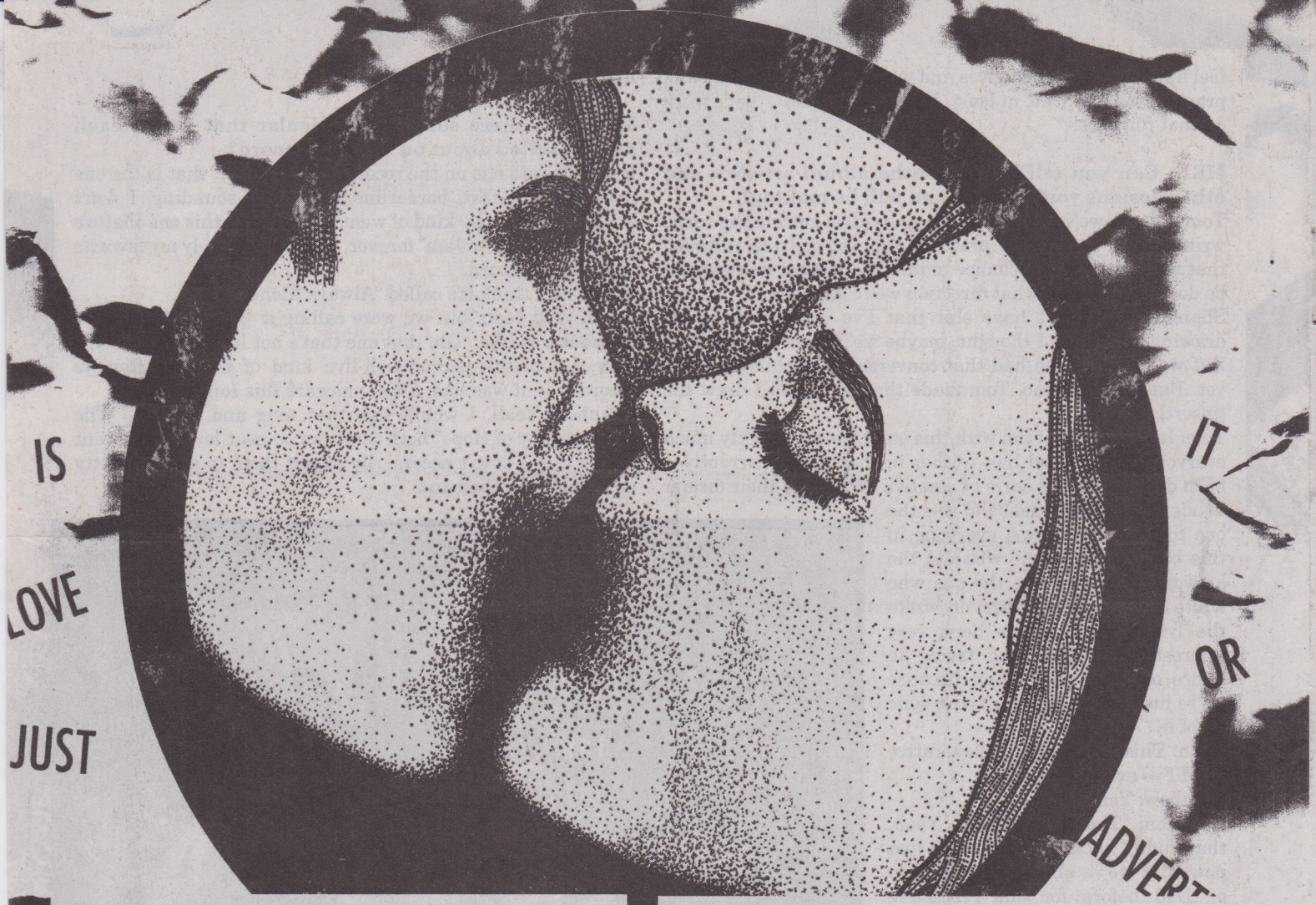
MRR: Can you tell me about the album artwork and other designs you've made and will be making?
Tom: I guess we've been working so hard on getting the songs written, and getting all practiced-up, and getting recorded that we haven't had a chance to talk about what we're gonna be doing for art and what direction we're gonna do.
Shannon: I mean I have shit that I've been working on, drawing-wise, that I thought, maybe we'll work in somehow. But we haven't even had that conversation within the band yet. But for the demo, Tom made the cover, and I drew the [insert].
Tom: It's just kind of fun with this band, because pretty much everyone in the band has—either in the past or currently—been driving various sorts of creative outputs in their former bands. Everyone in the band was the one to book the shows, everyone in this band was the one who did the artwork, everyone was the one who wrote a lot of the songs or wrote the lyrics. For me, it's been very interesting in this band trying to figure out who does what, because we're just all so used to having done all of it.
Ryan: This is the most collaborative band I've ever been in.
Matthew: Yeah, same.
Shannon: That's awesome. Yeah, that didn't occur to me until just now that we've all been Band Mom or Dad before for our respective projects. Things kind of shake out in interesting ways.
Ryan: I think I may have exclusively been Band Child.
Shannon: As I was saying that, I was like, "I don't know about Ryan."

MRR: Are there songs in particular that you're each really excited about on the new record?
Ryan: There's one on the record, in particular, that is the one not hard, not fast, borderline...emotional-sounding, I don't know. I feel like we kind of went a place with this one that we were calling "Slow Jam" forever, and it's definitely my favorite song on the record.
Shannon: I think it's called "Always Alone."
Ryan: Well yeah, but we were calling it "Slow Jam" forever 'cause it was like, "Oh, that one that's not like the others. It's slow. I-hope-this-is-read-well-live kind of thing." After we recorded it, it was like, I was unaware this song's so good.
Shannon: Yeah, I would say, that song and, for me, "The Pornography of Hope" both came out so next-level, both went places that I didn't necessarily expect them to and do pretty new things for the band.

Tom: Yeah, I really like how "The Pornography of Hope" came out.

MRR: There's a couple of lyrics that sound like critiques of the punk scene...if you could elaborate on ["*Playing dress up for keeps / So concerned with the ways we've learned to bleat like black-clad sheep*"] and "*boys in a circle*"?

Shannon: Yeah, so the lyric about "*boys in a circle, bragging about hand jobs they get from themselves*" is actually an image I used on the [demo for my old band] Sex, and also before that, in a zine that I wrote, and just thought it was too good to let die in a zine and on a tape that no



one would ever really notice.

Ryan: Fuck yeah. I didn't know that until right now. I'm a huge proponent for recycling things until they're like "This is gonna last."

Shannon: I think I got it right this time. And, yeah, the second verse of "Faultless"... I think a big theme in the lyrics generally is denial and how we reconcile living in an unjust world, and knowing that we contribute to that, and especially for white people, benefit from that... How you reconcile that with having to live in the world. The second verse of "Faultless" is the first time that I explored that in this band vis-a-vis the punk scene...A big part of that song was the idea that someone can be like, a real punk. I'm not interested in that, and I think that's a distraction. A lot of the lyrics are about the ways we distract ourselves from the terrible, exploitative world that we live in.

MRR: Was there any outside feedback between putting out your demo and getting ready to record this that drove you to do something differently?

Matthew: I'm just thinking about how Sadie [of G.L.O.S.S. and Dyke Drama] said we sounded like if Anti-Flag was a real punk band and then that made you question whether or not you should actually sing that part in a way that sounded like an Anti-Flag song. Like, that had an influence, right?

Shannon: Yeah, definitely. I never would have thought we sounded like Anti-Flag unless Sadie had pointed it out.

MRR: Your lyrics definitely have substance, and I was wondering if you all felt obligated to have there be more of a message or to take a stance not just have songs about partying or looking punk?

Shannon: Yeah, by having the blueprint going in that this was a peace punk-influenced band, that gave some direction to it. But I wanted to take the opportunity to write lyrics for a band very seriously, and wasn't gonna write about sniffing glue or wanting to have something to do. I was thinking about this the other day, I try to write songs that are clearly about something without being too sloganeering. And also, they're just longer songs. Our songs average around three minutes or something, so that, as opposed to a D-beat band or whatever, where a chorus is gonna be four syllables repeated four times, I kind of get to explore ideas more. There's more room to get a little deeper than saying, "Fuck war." So I don't necessarily think that I'm doing something better than other bands, but I'm just trying to bring my personality to it and write lyrics that I would think are interesting.

Pandemix's demo tape Pathological Culture *was just reissued as a flexi by Boss Tuneage. Listen at pandemixpunx.bandcamp.com.*

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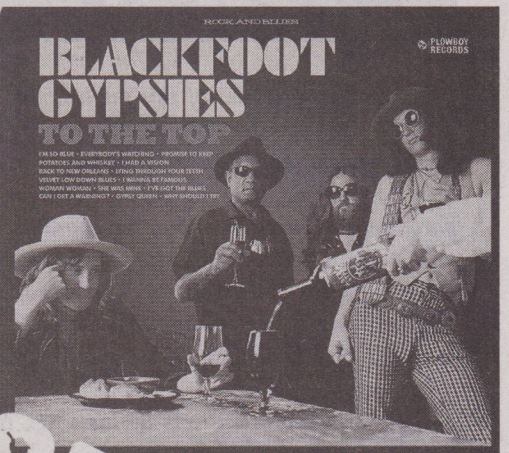

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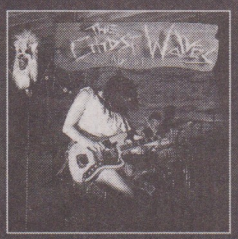

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EXACER

For the average reader of this publication, the word "grindcore" conjures up a number of images: dirty concrete basements, malt liquor, violent and usually arrhythmic moshing and thrashing about. Rarely does it evoke the environment of a veritable tropical paradise like Costa Rica. But even paradise can breed discontent and a desire for that cathartic release that can only be achieved through a visceral demonstration in speed, brevity and volume. If you were to give a name to that discontent, it might come in the form of a little band called Exacerbación from Cartago.

Questions by Dom, answers by Juan AC, translated by Ariadna Sanchez.

MRR: Do you have any desire to play in the US some day? I know oftentimes it comes down not just to money (though that is the primary roadblock) but also the logistics of leaving your lives at home behind in order to do something that may not gain you much (or any) money. What would it take to see you over here?
Money is the main obstacle, as we believe that the remaining details are easily resolved, everything is possible. It would really be an honor to visit and share our noise. Honestly Exacerbación never left the country to play for that reason, It's something I really want to do.

Unfortunately there are migratory conditions between borders and our countries, and we do not know if it is possible. Perhaps formal invitations or working contracts for processing entry permits (VISA) would be basic. And sad, but true, money solves almost all problems (not a rockstar attitude!).

Exacerbación started in Cartago, Costa Rica in 2008. In 2013 and up to now it has its third and final alignment more inclined to crude grindcore deduced from grind noise. The theme at the beginning was only about violence, their various ways of manifestation, addressing violence as fully and naturally human. Today our lyrics speak basically about how no one should tell us what to think, that there is nothing else to believe in ourselves, neither god nor master. We do not like homophobia, xenophobia, sexism machismo-feminism, dogmas, animal abuse. We speak and criticize that stupid predictable self-destruction of societies. Therefore Exacerbación, in or way to see it, is basically the irritation, the excitement, the mood of increased anger as a product of everything we don't like mostly. So our band name is consistent with the themes of the band both in sound and lyrics. It is our way of expressing ourselves.

MRR: Do you feel that your DIY ethics inform other parts of your life? Such as work, family life, or other non-musical endeavors.
We live alternative lives. Alejandro works in advertising design and practices veganism. He has a food company for vegans called La Semilla. Juan runs a hostel in the middle of the rainforest of Golfito called Tinamú Backpackers. Jean Carlo is the youngest; he is in college. In our family lives we practice vegetarianism and veganism, we strive for not being consumerists and we always try to be self-sufficient with everything we can. At this time we all live a long distance away and this makes the conditions of the band very difficult since we can only devote some of our free time to the band. We like to draw and design our covers and all that we can for the band.

BACIÓN

MRR: Do you think that growing up where you did has an influence on your musical path? Costa Rica is uncharacteristically progressive. Do you think this contributes to the lack of grindcore? People just aren't angry about anything, or is it not quite as pristine as it seems from the outside?

Our critique and anger at the stupid things that humanity makes has no borders, sees no nationality. If our country currently has a privileged location, taking into account the global situation, that is no reason not to worry and bother by this constant threat where we have the planet Earth and everything in it, a threat for which humans are solely responsible. Exacerbación for us is the means by which we express our dismay, our anger and hatred against all irrational acts of societies.

MRR: What influences you as a band, not just in Exacerbación, but as musicians / people?

As you know Exacerbación members play with other bands or projects spanning genres like punk, D-beat, death, gore, ambient noise ,and grindcore. The influences of each are as diverse and varied, and all three of us contribute in different ways. Exacerbación has never thought of sounding like X band—we have always worked in a unique sound of the band.

MRR: Is there much regional cooperation across country lines in Latin America or is it pretty much country by country?

In Central America at the moment we don't know grindcore bands. With the last formation in 2013 we began to have a growing rapproachment with South American bands. It has been very rewarding, but we don't really think that there is a "cooperation"—it is more an interest, of mutual benefit to record labels and the band. Many of the materials occur through direct contact between the bands. If you are constantly disinterested, if you do things right, your music gets the attention of either bands or record companie. For Exacerbación it's funny being one of the few Central American bands with this profile and it was a little easier to get the attention.

We can deduce that most labels interested in editing our material are European or American such as: Pan del muerte and SPHC (USA) released 516 copies in 2013 of our *Desastre Humano* 7" EP, our first release in this format.

Another record label interested is Grindfather (UK) which released two split cassettes featuring Shitnoise Bastards and Rottingrex. For coming recordings we will have more help from Latin American labels like Eskaramuza Records (Chile), Gate of Horror (Peru), Grind Your Mind (Brazil), and Lógica Ciega (Panama).

Today we are having a lot of support with Latino groups and labels. The last split 7" Exacerbación, Dios Hastío and Juventud Podrida was a project that was fully managed in Latin America. The remaining materials are supported by several Latin labels; every time we notice more support and attention from other bands and record labels in the isthmus.

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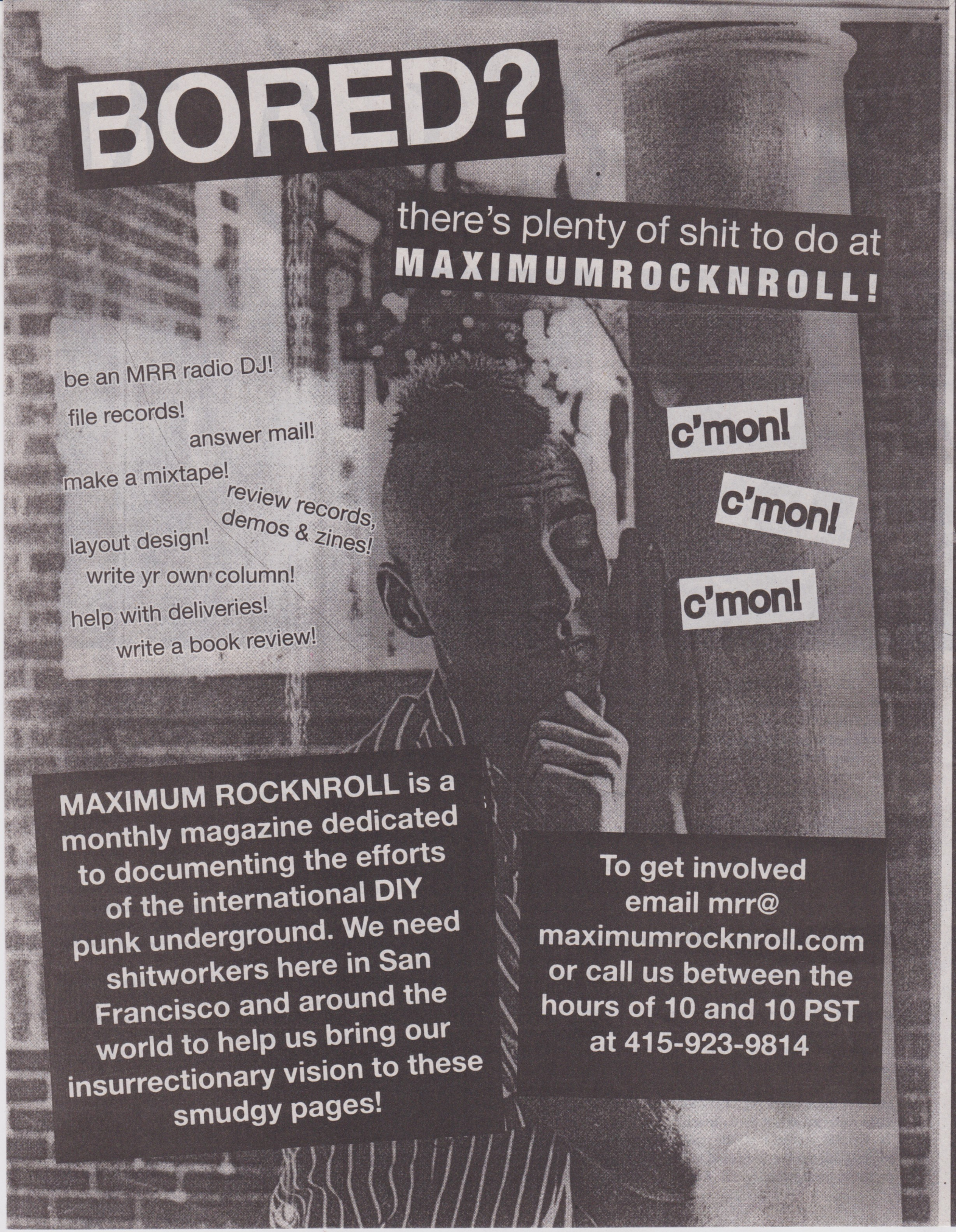
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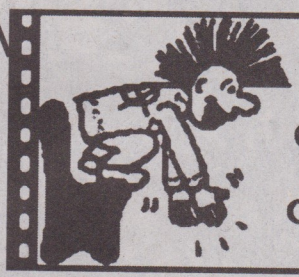

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

In these nutty, nasty political times I have found myself returning to the past to see how we got here and more importantly what the outcome may be. CNN did three series of decades documentaries: **The Sixties**, **The Seventies** and **The Eighties**. I thought I'd jump in feet first to each and see what happened. As they say history repeats itself. Of the many strangely deja vu moments in these series, the most telling is Ronald Reagan giving a speech that called for making American great again while running for president in 1979. We survived Reagan. Will we survive Trump?

Each of the series devotes an episode to the music of the decade. Well, **The Sixties** has two episodes since I assume these were made by baby boomers who constantly live under the assumption that the '60s music is the best. Squishing an entire decade of music into forty minutes will always come across as inadequate. Only the most popular musicians as determined by the makers of the documentary are included. I am aware of this going in. I always approach music documentaries with an attitude of curiosity at what is included and why. Not concentrating on the flaws makes these things more palatable.

The first music episode of **The Sixties** is unsurprisingly called "The British Invasion." It focuses on the Beatles and all the other British bands who made it in America at the time. An interesting note of this episode is that it points out that after the Beatles invaded they were followed by the Hollies, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Kinks and others. Later in the episode the Rolling Stones are mentioned. I always thought the Beatles and the Rolling Stones went hand in hand. They were the rivals of the British Invasion. Yet, if I am to believe CNN's version, that rivalry took longer to develop. The Stones took more time to find their sound than the others. There are also segments on the rediscovery of American blues musicians due to the British musicians' appreciation for them and the folk movement focusing mostly on Bob Dylan.

The second music episode of **The Sixties** is "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'N' Roll". This episode focuses on the introduction of LSD to the scene. The result of LSD commingling with music is the Grateful Dead, the Summer of Love, Woodstock and Altamont. This episode is an excellent anti-drug allegory even though it probably doesn't mean to be one. Everything starts out fun with people expanding their minds and trying to better their world. The ideals of free love and free stuff are floating around San Francisco. 400,000 people show up in a small New York town for the Woodstock festival. The festival organizers overlooked that people might need to eat something and drink water during a three-day festival, but they do solve the problem while the festival is in full swing. The West Coast version of Woodstock is Altamont. Altamont's organizers decide to hire the Hell's Angels as security. The Angels get drunk and high and proceed to beat up performing musicians while onstage and ultimately stab an audience member to death. Then there's Charles Manson.

Ending **The Sixties** on such low notes results in **The Seventies** music episode "What's Goin' On" starting with the drug overdoses of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison. Also The Beatles break up which is stated as a death as well. A majority of the episode focuses on what the '60s musicians do in the '70s. The Beatles go solo and music gets overblown and overindulgent. There is also David Bowie, but he sort of fits into those categories too. As does the rise of disco and cocaine. The decade ends with a quick mention of the birth of punk and hiphop.

Not to be outdone, **The Eighties** music episode "Video Killed The Radio Star" starts with the murder of John Lennon. The episode focuses on the rise of MTV starting with the introduction of a new British invasion of new wave pop stars. There is discussion of American musicians not being too video savvy and getting into the MTV game later than the English. Then there is the exclusion of African American musicians from the MTV airwaves. That results in the television station being strong-armed into playing Michael Jackson's videos and his subsequent take over of the station. There is also the rise of hiphop and hair metal. Plus a quick mention of REM as representative of college rock and the summation of the whole decade being Nirvana.

Most of the musical information in **The Sixties**, **The Seventies** and **The Eighties** is stuff I already know. That's alright. With the proliferation of music documentaries and books it seems a realistic version of overall musical history is coming together slowly. The more you learn, the more you know. Even in this year of alternative facts and lack of truth. (streaming)

I subscribe to **Night Flight,** a channel based on and named after the old television series that originally aired on the USA Network. I know I've mentioned it before. I watch anything that comes up on it and they add new things every week. An episode from 1986 called "Directions In Jazz and Double Exposure" seemed innocuous enough. Yet what I found was amazing and I cannot find any information anywhere about it. I feel like I have discovered a lost punk classic.

Double Exposure is a twenty-two minute film from 1982 shot in Chicago. The story focuses on John the aspiring singer of a band. John brings his friend Neil who manages a club in Chicago to visit John's parents in the suburbs. The encounter is usual family stuff—talk about work, in John's case getting a job, and a family meal. Then it's off to the club for the show.

The scenes at the show are so funny. They are trying a bit too hard to appear punk, but in a charming way. Everyone in the audience as well as the opening band are wearing those plastic new wave sunglasses that are a straight line. The band is performing a song called "Maynard G Krepps." It's pretty catchy. John's band performs "She Walks, She Talks." It's a catchy song too. Then John walks into the crowd and the film is over. It was written and directed by the mysterious Georges Nahitchevansky. The credits say the music is performed by Peter Gunn. If anyone knows these people please tell them how great this film is for me. (nightflight.com)

Also on **Night Flight** is **Adjust Your Tracking: The Untold Story of The VHS Collector**. I have reviewed another documentary about VHS collecting called **Rewind This!** which featured a lot of the same characters as well as the same stories and interviews. Both documentaries are from 2013. I have a working VHS player that I use. I have a bunch of VHS tapes that are mostly stuff I either shot or recorded off television. I understand the desire to keep these things and collect them. I have no problem with it. However, listening to people talk about collecting, no matter what the object is, wears on you really quickly and an hour twenty-four minutes is too much.

Adjust Your Tracking: The Untold Story of The VHS Collector focuses on the collectors' personal stories, how they got into VHS tapes and why. What I find interesting about VHS collectors is their organization methods. They are mostly very tidy. One person has set up a mock video store in his basement. Of course, he doesn't rent out his tapes. Another has his sorted by levels of gore. The oddities of personality more than the actually reasons for the collecting make this somewhat enjoyable. (adjustyourtracking.com)

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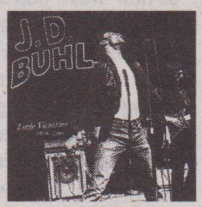

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Spoke: Images and Stories from the 1980s Washington, DC Punk Scene
Compiled by Scott Crawford
Akashic Books, 2017
132 pgs | $24.95

In the fall of 1991 I was eighteen years old and happily on my way from New Hampshire to Washington, DC. Cynthia Connolly's 1988 book about Washington punks, *Banned in DC*, had a huge influence on my high school teenage life and I couldn't wait to get to the Capitol and fuck shit up with old school DC people who unsurprisingly, when I got there, wanted nothing to do with some saucer-eyed child from the weird wild north. Instead, I hung out with riot grrrls and spraypainted bridges in Arlington, VA with feminist slogans. I went to Bikini Kill shows and wore waaay too many barrettes in my hair and I ate a ton of vegetarian chili at the dark and somewhat cavernous Food For Thought. It wasn't what I imagined but I still managed to have a lot of fun. The teenaged girl that I was at the time was pretty pissed that Minor Threat had the audacity to break up, but I was happily blown away by making it to Nation of Ulysses's last show. I also had the pleasure of seeing Fugazi play numerous times, as well as Jawbox and Shudder to Think, all of whom are well represented in Scott Crawford's new book, *Spoke*.

The point of sharing all this personal history is that books can inspire, and that I never would have packed up and moved 456 miles away from where I was born without the belief that a better, more interesting world was possible. I got that belief from the pages of a thing that read like a high school yearbook for the plaid and safety pin set, which makes sense as I myself had just graduated from a high school and I definitely was into plaid. And safety pins. Many years have passed since I have lived in DC and many hard and horrible life events have made me incredibly jaded and mostly unimpressed with everything. But when I pick up a book like Connolly's and now Crawford's, it is so easy to remember what hope and inspiration and fun feels like; the music, the indescribable feeling of places like DC Space, the Wilson Peace Center and the 9:30 Club, the energy and the amazing people that made DC a place to be.

Scott Crawford's punk claim to fame is that he got the music bug pretty early at the age of twelve. Unlike me, Crawford only had to travel from the Metro Area suburbs to downtown DC, where he probably was the youngest kid in attendance at shows during the 1980s, He wrote about the DC phenomena in a fanzine called *Metrozine* and went on to create the documentary *Salad Days* in 2014 with photographer Jim Saah, which tells the story of the DC scene through a collection of images, stories, and interviews of many of the people who were there.

Spoke is a companion-piece to *Salad Days*, expanding a little on individual stories, and pulling unused bits from the more than a hundred interviews that were conducted to make the film. This book highlights some of the best moments you could find in DC between the dates of 1977 and 1989. There are a million amazing photos, personal anecdotes, oral histories and quick introductions of each band presented. Unsurprisingly to those acquainted with the genre, the action photos, which were shot at numerous shows over the decade, are the best part. Nothing like raw adolescent punk / hardcore photos of sweaty dog-piling youth to renew a sense of hope and optimism in the world, to be sure.

Twenty-five bands are represented in this book, ranging from the Bad Brains to Nation of Ulysses and so many in between. As many other reviewers have already pointed out, there is a particularly low representation of female musicians in this book, with only Kim Coletta from Jawbox and members of the band Fire Party mentioned. On the positive side, Crawford's book reminds us that punk and hardcore in DC did have some racial diversity in the '80s, something that I think changed for the worse in the '90s. It seems like the point of this book was to focus in on just a few bands, increasing the depth of historical knowledge available for these groups. But I wonder if Crawford refocused his efforts on women and people of color if this would not have made an even more dynamic read.

Spoke is pure eye candy with so many anecdotes and asides that any DC music nerd would be happy to spend several hours salivating over the book. But it feels unnecessary as the documentary *Salad Days* essentially covers the same terrain. *Spoke* actually includes fewer bands but doesn't radically expand the information given about each one. I am happy looking through this book, as it is fun to read, but I would have been even happier reading about bands or people in the scene that didn't make it into the original documentary. Fortunately Crawford recognizes this and gives information about how to find out more about the era in his introduction.

So what's the verdict on *Spoke*? Overall, it's pretty good. For those of us who are obsessed with the 1980s and the District of Columbia, this book would be a welcome addition to any DC-centric book collection. Does it widen the historical view on the era? Not really. Would it make a teenager travel hundreds of miles from her home in search of...something? Probably not.

—Meghan Monahan

OK
by Kool A.D.
Sorry House, 2016
250 pgs | $16.95

I read an interview with Ursula K. Le Guin where she speaks to the Social-Darwinist imperative of defining a novel around conflict. She demands that we look at the histories of stories that do not rely on conflict for their lifeblood. There's certainly a well-asserted and documented history of writers who work to add to these histories. Perhaps particularly important to this history is the efforts of women

writers, queer writers, and writers of color with their more articulated divestments from the priority of war like literature.

Kool AD's novel *OK* was debuted one year after his prolific 100-track mixtape of the same name. Kool AD is an artist who pulls influence from every aspect of life. This rambling road quite literally pulls the reader all over the whole world. Kool AD's simulacrum protagonist Muhammad X zips around from shooting cops in Oakland to walks in the hills of Mexico to having tea in Tehran.

The rambling self-aware vignettes full of loaded references to philosophy, drugs, punk, rock, and hip-hop in light of the growing relationships between Mohammud X and his friends and family recall the experimental novels of Kathy Acker and Bernadette Mayer. The entire novel is conversational in tone and feels like one long acid- and speed-fueled interrogation of modern life.

The novel begins at the beginning of the family. Muhammad X meets the love of his life, Khadija, and they marry a dozen times before conceiving their children. The focus that Muhammad X places on his wife and children and their accomplishments is notable. In the novel, his first born daughter, Fatima, is a genius capable of building giant metal flying birds that zip the whole family around the world and into far reaching consciousness. Khadija meditates to transcend physical plain and lives her own groovy life.

The phrase OK dots the text as a consistent affirmation. In the words of Le Guin again, "It is a strange realism, but it is a strange reality." Every time a problem arises the promise of life's steady flow always continuing becomes relevant enough to evoke OK. It's a reminder to persist and find the joy in things that sustain you enough to say OK to the shit that doesn't.

While the narrator plops around the world he holds court with a variety of other characters. This list of interactions includes old friends gabbing about the Buzzcocks, a tiger on a boat who has never seen *The Life of Pi*, and getting scammed in the parking lot of a dollar movie theater in Philadelphia. The whirlwind does tend to drag and like all experimental fiction it demands a certain attention from the reader to hold out through these monotonous and incomprehensible scenarios.

All in all, the novel is a meditation on the joy of life and an aspiration to what's possible within the form. A case study of all that could happen if only we said OK.

—E. Conner

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(WN) Robert Collins

ACRYLICS – "Despair / Reassurance"

What I like the most about this EP (besides the guitar tone) is the story I heard of ACRYLICS bugging Iron Lung so much that they finally agreed to release this. We know what we like and what we're finally convinced to like? I first remember hearing and meeting these guys a couple years ago after moving to the North Bay. There aren't that many punks up here, and the ones that you can find are rather weird. ACRYLICS are no exception with stickers that say something like "Mother: Only a Fetus" with a picture of a tombstone. The practice in the years since has really paid off—this EP absolutely rips. It sees the GLUE knuckle-dragging hardcore game and raises it with haunting guitars, a crushing recording, and a little variety. Masterfully recorded and mastered by Jack Shirley. Hand numbered out of 300 (I got #303). Favorite side: Side A. (JC)
(Iron Lung)

AGE OF COLLAPSE – "Transmissions" LP

This unique brand of powerviolence and spastic melodicism reminds me of the epic nature of HOLY MOUNTAIN and the desperate screams of SKITKIDS. The everything-darker-than-everything-else formula left me squinting, though. A solid crust LP. (JR)
(Aborted Society)

ALIANS – "W Samo Południe" LP

If you're looking for ska punk that isn't cheesy as fuck, you might have to get out of North America. ALIANS is a group from Poland whose logo very boldly exhibits anarcho-syndicalist elements. The music itself is upbeat third wave ska punk, but don't think commercial clowns like REEL BIG FISH, LESS THAN JAKE, or STREELIGHT MANIFESTO. This is definitely not as cheery or corny as those bands; it's more in the tradition of cheap beer and SHARP skins. If you like ska at all (with a horn section and accordions), you should probably check these guys out. There's also a version of DEAD KENNEDYS's "Let's Lynch the Landlord"—I liked it! (DB)
(Pasażer)

ALL TORN UP! – "Social Immolation" EP

It's like I blinked and I'm back at ABC NO RIO circa the late '90s. Ripping super heavy politico hardcore straight outta the Bowery. Brutal hawd-core vox sound like someone may be obsessed with INTEGRITY and the unique vocal stylings of Dwid. Limited to 500 on red wax with download code. (GB)
(FtLP)

AMERICAN CULTURE / HOMEBODY – split EP

HOMEBODY dials in a plodding PAVEMENT-esque sprawl that eventually locks in to a MAGAZINE groove. On the flip, AMERICAN CULTURE deliver a take on JOHNNY THUNDERS' "Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory" that sounds like the CLEAN or something. I must admit, when I saw the title on the record, I thought, "why bother?" but this version sparkles. (AM)
(Heavy Dose)

ANIMALIZE – "Chain Those Beasts" CD

Positives: metal that is technically proficient, tight, and sounds tuff. Negatives: everything else. Metal chug tunes to the lyrics "*You find her in the nightclub / she's so sexy and so hot / Her only goal is to seduce you / she wants to exploit you too / Midnight midnight midnight / She's a midnight romancer / She's a perfect dancer.*" (CR)
(self-released)

ARTEFACT – "Votive Offering" LP

Well executed witchy and gothic post-punk from Cardiff that is not too distant from Portland's ARCTIC FLOWERS and DEAD CULT. I appreciate the solid chorus-laden riffs broken up with more angular parts that harmonize with carefully crafted bass lines. The packaging includes quality hand-drawn artwork and all of the lyrics to the ten songs. Fans of SIOUXSIE and XMAL DEUTSCHLAND won't likely be disappointed. (LT)
(Adagio830)

JAMES ARTHUR'S MANHUNT – "Staring At The Sun / Cherry Red"

JAMES ARTHUR served time in FIREWORKS and NECESSARY EVILS, and his solo records may arrive sporadically, but they are always fascinating. This 7" features two covers. The first is ANGRY SAMOANS "Staring At The Sun" which is stretched out to an amazing six minutes long (the original is 1:36)! It is completely wild and unhinged. Absolutely fantastic. The other is the GROUNDHOGS's "Cherry Red" which is equally great. There are only 300 copies so I probably won't find one. Alas. (CK)
(Spacecase)

ASMEREIR – "Chucaque Ancestral" CD

This Peruvian trio demonstrates a remarkable mastery of raging hardcore, ska, and reggae over the course of these eight tracks. They bring to mind the best of McRAD, LEFTOVER CRACK, AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY, FIFTEEN, and CULTURE SHOCK, all blended most delightfully. No horns, and all the better for it. (RK)
(Chaderno Roto Produciones)

ATAXXIA – "Bleedout" EP

Four songs of mid-tempo hardcore with Scandi-crust leanings from this Minneapolis crew. The vocals open up an easy comparison to DETESTATION, but where DETESTATION were thick and metallic, ATAXXIA are leaner and more punky. They work well with melody, and "Falling" and "Anxiety" in particular sport memorable hooks. "Anxiety" also stands out for its classic NAUSEA-style vocal trade-offs. Bonus points for the morbid-but-pretty silkscreened cover art that sidesteps genre conventions. (AU)
(25 Diamonds)

ATLANTES – "Adamastor" EP

I can definitely get behind an Oi! band featuring one of the dudes from RIXE / LION'S LAW playing music based on the myth of the lost city of Atlantis. I feel like Oi! kind of lends itself to this kind of subject matter. The TEMPLARS are one of the greatest punk bands of all time in my opinion and a good chunk of their catalog is based on the imagery / mythology surrounding the Knights Templar. It's also refreshing to see an Oi! band dig a little deeper and write about something esoteric instead of grabbing, "a pint at the pub, mate" (which is fine, I love those tracks too). "Adamastor" and "Les Tambours de Guerre" are great, more along the lines of what you expect from Oi! in 2017, melodic and tough, not unlike BISHOP'S GREEN but "A Feu et a Sang" is the real sleeper track on this record. Somewhere between BLITZ's move from punk to stuff like "New Age" or the opening track on *Second Empire Justice*, "Flowers and Fire." There's definitely a rougher new wave vibe that I love. This record is amazing. Pick it up. (MW)
(Spirit of the Streets)

BBQ – "Mark Sultan" LP

I will say I am amused by the title and / or artist selection on this one. The cover makes it look like a BBQ record, but the record label says it is a MARK SULTAN record. But that's six of one, half dozen of the other. This is Sultan's first one-man band record since 2005. Can that be true? No wonder it sounds so nice. Lo-fi and intimate with great songs. (CK)
(In The Red)

BETTY MACHETE AND THE ANGRY COUGARS – "Meetings / Pissed Again"

A giveaway single, apparently handed out at January 2017 COUGARS show in their native Ohio. "Meetings" is full steam ahead barroom punk with cool barked vocals. The flip is an AGGRAVATORS cover (natch, Ohio and all), so the whole punk'n'roll quotient is really high on this one, as if the name wasn't enough of a clue. A middling release across the board, but whataya want for free anyway? (MC)
(Cylinders / Dull-Fi)

BLACK ABBA – "Lost Dog / The Manager"

Two quick songs of rough and loose garage punk from New Orleans featuring a discordant organ and driving rhythms. "The Manager" wins out at the stronger track, but I feel like these two songs could be meshed together as one opus because they sound fairly similar...they just have slightly different tempos. All lyrics are sung as a group, which is pretty cool and disarming. It's really good, but it's not bowling me over. (GH)
(Total Punk)

BLANK SQUARE – "Animal I" LP

The saxophone is having its big punk moment and now it's arrived to the ever financially successful Castle Face Records in the form of this BLANK SQUARE LP. These punks play something like if a smooth jazz JAMES CHANCE worked with our local SCRAPER (mid-tempo skater garage), or maybe a more simplistically punk version of John Zorn and company's NAKED CITY, with its R'n'B cues and trash rock zaniness. The melodies are good, and while everything has just enough lo-fi haze of weed smoke to keep it chill, there's also enough delay and chilly, empty production to make you a little queasy. Skate to this. (LP)
(Castle Face)

BLOWINS – LP

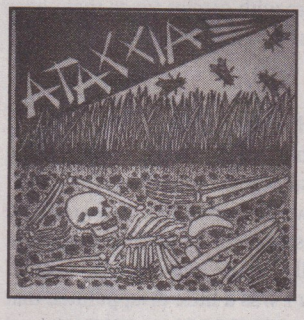
Moody and melodic punk from Ireland, sung in Polish. It reminds me of MANIFESTO JUKEBOX or NEON PISS mores than other Polish stuff. The mood and guitar tone and minor chords even bring FLIEHENDE STÜRME to mind. "Marny Trud" and "Selfish Selfie" show them breaking the mid-tempo mold a bit and thrashing things up a notch in the drum department. There's even a bit of '90s in their sound at times, but it's secondary. Nice, serious, shit-weather music. (MA)
(Pasażer)

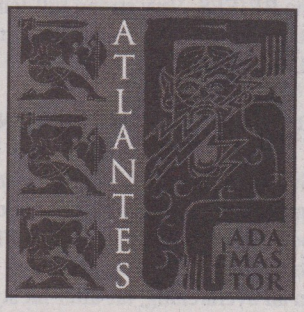
BOMB THE WORLD / POISON HEART – split CD

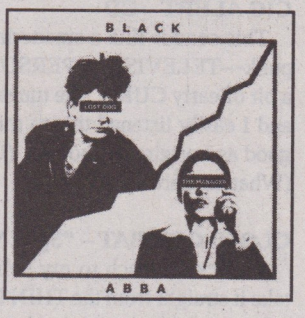
Titled *Monsterface*, this disc has four or so songs by each band. POISON HEART reminds me a lot of the CULT during their hard rock era. The vocal style is pretty similar. I didn't like this. The BOMB THE WORLD songs are also hard rocking, only with a GLEN DANZIG vocal styling. Their songs are a little more uptempo. Both bands being from Poland, I hope these punk bands don't have the "metal is punk" mindset like when METALLICA went mainstream and many newcomers thought they were punk. Oh well. (RL)
(self-released)

BRAD POT – LP

Weed is an upper now, right? Gotta be. How else would BRAD POT come to be? This initial offering from the group falls in line with their homeland contemporaries WOODBOOT and AUSMUTEANTS, though generally harder-edged at every go-around. There's a chemically-







enhanced sound at play here that overshadows any tossed-off or cheeky aspects, making this a welcome deviation from the now-normal mode of insincere punking. Shit's very frantic and angry and I believe in the asshole artistes that crafted this. Would play again. (MC)
(Slovenly)

BRAINEÄTER – LP

BRAINEÄTER offers up some crushing tracks reminiscent of RAW DEAL or KILLING TIME, all wrapped up in the production of an IRON REAGAN record. These are some pretty good NYHC-influenced tunes. (MW)
(Kaifasz / Trujaca Fala)

BRIEFS – "Odd Numbers" CD

Modern Action Records comes through again with another must-have for BRIEFS fans: twenty-two fucking unreleased songs and demos of your favorites. Honestly this might be my favorite BRIEFS full-length for showcasing a rawer, punker side of a band that is often too slick on record for my taste. Don't snooze punkers. These won't last forever. (RO)
(Modern Action)

J.D. BUHL – "Little Victories" LP

I must be one of very few at *MRR* currently familiar with J.D .BUHL. His 45s with the BELIEVERS are some of the last secret power pop nugs I'm still able to track down in Bay Area dollar bins. That, and he even had a UK issue of one of his US singles that seems all but forgotten. Even I didn't realize, though, that Mr. BUHL was also in the JARS, later of Subterranean Records fame, including their first incarnation circa 1978 as the SAVIORS. Extensive liner notes insert cover most of this elusive history. Which brings us to the tunes...J.D. is obviously a rock'n'roller at heart as these myriad incarnations make evident. The SAVIORS tracks are raw and frantic punk / R&B shouters, which evolved into more pop terrirories with the JARS, whose "Do Ya Blame Me" is top US pop. Their previously unreleased "Cindy's Having a Record Party" from the same session is their bonafide hit—these tracks sit with the best of their Bomp-era pop peers. "Kiss and Tell" from the second BELIEVERS EP is also a great rockin' powerpop tune. The VELVETS outtake "I'm Set Free" is pretty great. (GB)
(Mighty Mouth)

J.D. BUHL BAND – "Some Are Still Not Free" CD

JD BUHL AND THE BELIEVERS were a Berkeley, CA band who released two singles and an album in the '80s. After that JD BUHL gave up music to teach English. Now he's back with a new band and album. Why? Some songs are rock, some are country. They are over-produced, too busy and generic. Buhl has a nice voice and I guess he needed to get this out of system. For nostalgia listening only. (CK)
(Driving)

D.L. BURDON – "Accidental Aesop" CD

So this guy apparently did some time in LEATHERFACE and also had his own band FORMER CELL MATES, who were pretty solid modern UK punk. After a stint living in the US, he is back in the UK making music again. This, however, is nothing like the two mentioned bands. This is singer songwriter stuff with a backing band à la GASLIGHT ANTHEM, the WEAKERTHANS, and MATT PRYOR. By the end of the CD it gets pretty solo sounding. Still, this guy has some cool history and he can write and belt out a good tune. (RL)
(Boss Tuneage)

CAPTAIN THREE LEG / SHORT ORDER – split EP

Grind / noisecore masters CAPTAIN THREE LEG grace the world with seventeen tracks of idiotic and occasionally hilarious splatter. The ultra-short noisecore stuff is the best, thought the NYHC parody song got a legit out-loud laugh from me so it may be the best thing on their side. Can't believe these guys have been around for 20+ years! I guess this a great example of what living in Iowa does to people. SHORT ORDER offer up eight tracks of fast hardcore that's heavily influenced by early DRI, with a bit of a CAPITALIST CASUALTIES vibe as well. Pretty good (it definitely grew on me with a second listen) but the CAPTAIN takes this one running. (AU)
(self-released)

CASTET – "Twardsi Niż Najtwardsza Garda" LP

This one has some real nice packaging. It's got high definition cover photo of live tattooing action. It's got shiny, protruding letters. It's got their entire Instagram account printed on their insert. And let's not forget about the gatefold capabilities—pretty nice! The music, however, is bland bar hardcore with vague Oi! influences and gang vocal choruses. Lyrics are in Polish (and not included anyway), but given the vast amount of photos included I'm guessing most of the songs are mostly about tattoos and beer. I would recommend this one exclusively to people who are friends of the band. (BA)
(Pasażer)

CFM – "Home Grown Paranoia" EP

CFM is Charles Francis Moothart, TY SEGALL associate. Unfortunately you can surmise what the music sounds like simply by that connection. It's fuzzy, stompy, thrash-y garage rock with a hint of metal guitar influence. The songs rock out. It's also interesting and nice to see the modern garage rock scene starting to get political. (CK)
(In The Red)

CHANNEL RATS – "Worst Days" CD

This is a sort of obscure West German band from the '80s that has now reformed. Like some older bands do, they've gone on to more of a hard drinking Oi! sound that always goes well with growing bellies and thinning hair. Some songs are in German and some ain't. Some are really silly (see: "Micky Maus"). They have a later ANGELIC UPSTARTS or COCK SPARRER sound with forays into thrashier tunes. Their singer sounds a little like Udo from ACCEPT. It's just kinda OK, if not really horrible at times. Balls to the wall. (RO)
(self-released)

CIG ALERT – CD

This sounds like a smattering of late '70s / early '80s British post-punk—TELEVISION PERSONALITIES, SHOP ASSISTANTS, even a bit of early CURE. The tunes are simplistic and surprisingly melodic, and I easily listened this to this four times just to make sure it was as good as I originally thought. (CR)
(What on Earth?)

CLOSE COMBAT – "Spiet Vaan Niks" CD

Musically, much to my delight, these gravelly-voiced Dutch chaps take it straight from the THIN LIZZY / IRON MAIDEN rock playbook: mid-paced songs, with loads of twin guitar solos, just missing the high tenor voices. Fantastic. The closest, musically, that they even approach the genre they're trundling along in, would be the cover of the classic "Freedom" by the LAST RESORT, complete with its wonderful lead guitar (by some ringer barely credited on the LP). Being a bit of a fan of such classic rock and power chords, I think this is wonderful! I can even handle the vocals…it's that good! (RK)
(Spirit of the Streets)

CREEPETH – "Creep Feed EP" 12"

Hey all you long hairs, listen up! Here's some crazy blown-out rock music out of Dallas just for you. Imagine if you combined glam-inspired proto-punk and the MELVINS. Ever wonder what the NEW YORK DOLLS would have sounded like if they got really into stoner metal? It's heavy and it's catchy with a hint of psych. Pretty cool stuff. Single-sided LP with a screen-printed image on the flip. Get wild! (FS)
(self-released)

THE CROISSANTS / RAD – split EP

By the time I sat down, this record was already on song 11 of the A side, a sick JERRYS KIDS cover. Thrashing fastcore is back. Go! The RAD side of this split contains quite a bit of swearing and also a lot of thrashing. No lyrics, but the singer is clearly pissed about asshole apologists and I support that. I also support the hating of rules. I'm having trouble keeping up with this record, which says something. This has the intensity and jump-the-rails drumming that only a band in love with JERRYS KIDS could provide. On the flip, we have the CROISSANTS, not just France's favorite breakfast pastry. This is stripped down, fuzzed-out downer punk. I dig it. Sends important messages to the kids, like "*Don't play cool with me / If you play cool with me / Then you're totally dead.*" Favorite song on this split: "Everyone's a Rocker" by the CROISSANTS. Instant classic. The only thing I don't like about this record is that the center labels have the same band picture as the cover art. Get it together please, graphic designer. (JC)
(Sacramento)

CYANIDE PILLS – "Sliced And Diced" CD

This is the third full-length from this UK band and I've liked them all so far. This band has an old school punk feel circa 1979 with a good sense of melody that borders on power pop at times. They remind me of the BUZZCOCKS, the ADVERTS, the CHORDS, and more recently the BRIEFS. Very strong full-length here with catchy songs that never start sounding the same. One of this year's best so far. (RL)
(Damaged Goods)

DANGUS TARKUS – "Rock N' Roll for the People" LP

DANGUS TARKUS is the brainchild of NANCY member Joe Sussman, and it follows along in that same catchy rock territory with more nods to glam and AM radio. A few riffs sound like they could've been lifted from the CHEAP TRICK school of songwriting and put through a SPITS song generator. Overall, the album is completely solid in an overarching, hit-after-hit style, but I was a little disappointed that the best songs on here are all covers (PANTHERMAN, SPARKS, and NIKKI & THE CORVETTES). The originals have a hard time standing up to those hooks, but they do a damn fine job of trying. As for the art: of the millions of things you could possibly put on a record cover, an unsoiled American flag should never, ever be one of them. (GH)
(Dig!)

DATE NIGHT WITH BRIAN – CD

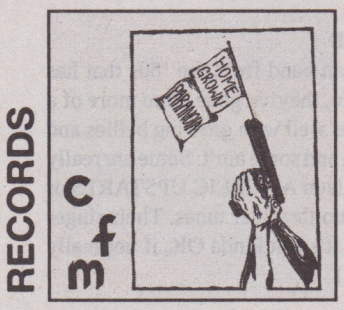
As an old timer, it's in my nature to give a little extra credit to fellow old timers, but damn, this is some old timers sugary old man pop stuff! These folks are definitely SUPERCHUNK addicts. I swear that there's a song that rips off the fast rappin' ridiculousness of Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start The Fire" and that is so, so strange. This is a little too syrupy for me, but if Top Drawer is back in action, I'm a little stoked for the future. (DZ)
(Top Drawer)

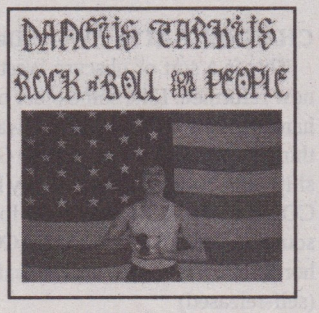
DEADLOCK / THE FILL INS – split EP

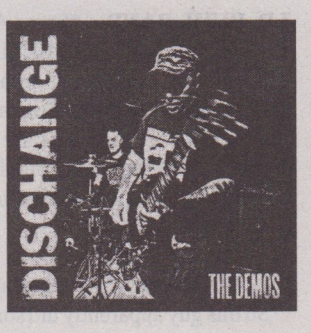
Yo. I totally get repping where you're from, and DEADLOCK is all about their stomping grounds. I've never been to Rutherford County but I kinda wanna see it now. From what I can tell off this cut, being from Rutherford County means you can spot a fake, you stand tall with your heads held high, and you stick together with your crew. All things I can get behind. Also, completely appreciate the knuckle dragging, mid-tempo jams, and totally fuck with the half time breakdown. If you like DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR or HOODS, or Victory Records circa 1996–2000, you'll be down for this band. The FILL INS are here to *save rock and roll*, you feel me?! If you like ZEKE, but don't like the punk parts, then you'll love this. If you *loved* the newest DYS record, then this is for you. If you dig NASHVILLE PUSSY and HANK III, get this. (MW)
(No Profit / Scat Boy)

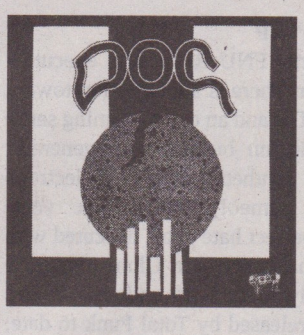
DEZERTER – "Historia" 2xLP

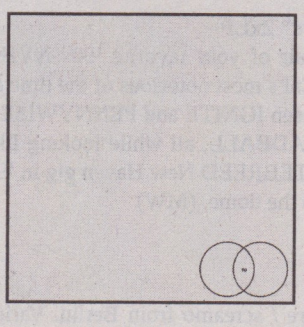
Long overdue revisit / overview of this legendary Polish hardcore band's influential oeuvre. Starting back in the depths of repressive Poland in the early '80s, DEZERTER released their essential first EP, the first Eastern European punk record circa 1983. The band struggled for many years to spread their message abroad by tape trading and correspondence. *Maximum Rocknroll* would go on to release the *Underground Out of Poland* LP in 1987, solidifying their reputation











abroad, and by 1989 the band finally went on to tour the world. Talk about dedication. For fans of '80s Euro hardcore, DEZERTER is hard to beat, keeping it fast and rough with less of the new wavish tendencies you get listening to other Polish punks, including some of the toughest '80s female vox hardcore you're likely to find. This double LP set comes with an extensive history / lyric book. Just 150 colored vinyl copies on Blood / Bones vinyl (that's red and white for us 'Mercans), I imagine those will go fast. (GB)
(Pasażer)

DISCHANGE – "The Demos" LP

This definitely isn't one for the audiophiles, but as a document of early D-beat it's invaluable! As the liner notes explain, the masters for both these demo sessions were lost, leaving this LP to be mastered from cassette copies, and the sound is (unsurprisingly) pretty fucking raw (which is the nicest possible spin I can put on it). The tunes are absolutely blazing anyway, sound quality be damned. Originally a side-project of NO SECURITY members Jallo and Kenko, DISCHANGE existed for one purpose only: to bang out DISCHARGE-worshipping loud hardcore punk, complete with furious solos. *Demo 2* is the star of the show (some of these tracks will be familiar to connoisseurs as they appeared on the split with C.F.D.L.), featuring the addition of bassist Kaasu from the mighty VALVONTAKOMISSIO. The sound is cleaner and the riffs are damn near perfect. This demo is legitimately one of the best D-beat releases of the 1990s. This is essential material for genre fans. (AU)
(Nuclear Fear / Rust and Machine)

D.O.C. – "Parched Dredge" EP

This little record holds about ten tons of grindcore Armageddon from Washington, DC. This is some real murky shit that harkens back to the grim days of TERRORIZER. This record has the temperament of a tornado. It's dark, it's deafening, there's shit flying everywhere, and then it's gone. If you have black and white visions of rubble and decay running through your mind, then this should be blaring in your ears. (BA)
(Iron Lung)

THE DOGS – "Slash Your Face" EP

Inaugural *Killed By Death* doggies see their crowning achievement from '78 reissued yet again. "Slash Your Face" is expert Detroit muscle hard rock reanimated, a sound built on the promise of those final STOOGES demos, albeit executed in a more coherent and spikier fashion than anyone would've dreamed. And they called it punk, ya see, which is why we're still talkin' 'bout it 40 years later. The mid-tempo frustrater "Fed Up" and a boogie take on "Are You a Boy Or Are You a Girl?" make up the flip, which you're likely to play once every five or six years just to remind yourself of their existence. No matter, the viciousness of the title tune is all anyone needs, really. Yes, yeah, and yup, 'tis a classic. (MC)
(Last Laugh)

DOWN LOVE – "Trust" CD

This UK band walks that fine line between emo and pop punk with sincere vocals and intricate melodies. These guys are talented and know how to write songs. Apparently they've been in the underground UK punk scene for a long time and have played in bands such as JERRY BUILT and JETPACK. This is the band's first release but it sounds like they've been at it for a while. For fans of JAWBREAKER, FUGAZI, and MEGA CITY 4. (DB)
(Boss Tuneage)

DREAMDECAY – "YÚ" LP

Being saddled with the responsibility of describing DREAMDECAY's new LP is daunting, to say the least. There are so many different things happening at once on this record but it never detracts from the cohesiveness of the greater whole. Kraut rock, noise, psychedelia, hardcore, post-punk, and art-rock all collide into one another at different intervals, creating an accomplished, full-sounding record that is immediately engaging and explosive. To make comparisons might cheapen it, but I'm hearing strains of guitars from SONIC YOUTH's *Daydream Nation*, some of the dynamics that made that first TOTAL CONTROL record so good, and the whatever-the-fuck-magic of WIRE's *Chairs Missing*. That feels like I'm only scratching the surface. DREAMDECAY is a being all their own. These crazy brainworm hooks crawl out of the mire of swirling guitars and pummeling drums before sinking back in, making you wonder if they were ever even there. I'm looking forward to peeling back the layers of this record over repeated listens. Pure perfection. (GH)
(Iron Lung)

EL BANDA – "Przejdezie Ci" LP

This is a jerk move, but I often look up reissue records and see if the original pressing is readily available. (It is.) This is the first pressing on *black* vinyl for this 2006 debut LP from Warsaw's EL BANDA. Some ties can be drawn to the same feeling and energy as POST-REGIMENT, but EL BANDA definitely falls more in line with melodic punk and Epitaph-style production. Still, it has guts and grit. Tracks like "Przejdezie Mi" and "Kamienne Twarze" are catchy as fuck…like you'd put them on a mixtape before even hearing them all the way through the first time. Overall, it's a really strong LP and deserving of a reissue…even if you can still get the original pressing easily. (GH)
(Pasazer)

EL BANDA – "Wściekłyszpaler" EP

It's been over six years since EL BANDA gave us any new material. Their last album *Skutki Uboczne* was the best double LP of 2010. These new songs are every bit as fierce, catchy, and unrelenting as anything they've done. They've foregone the extra instrumentation (cellos and such) of their previous record, and returned to the more classic punk sound of their first LP. Super essential hardcore out of Warsaw. Highly recommended. (FS)
(Pasażer)

1125 – "Tysiąc Sto Dwadzieścia Pięć" 2xLP

These Polish bruisers have the flair of your favorite '90s NYHC bands with the sound of some of SoCal's most notorious of the time as well. 1125 slides in somewhere between IGNITE and PENNYWISE's melody and the gruff delivery of MADBALL, all while looking like the fans in attendance at that one HATEBREED New Haven gig in '97 where someone catches a mad ball to the dome. (MW)
(Pasażer)

FABRIK FABRIK – 12"

Nine tracks of heavy post-hardcore / screamo from Berlin. Varied rhythms topped with desolate instrumentation and a screamer that never changes pitch the whole record. He sounds like the guy from FROM ASHES RISE. The last song is a SLIME cover, but it's a screamo rendition of an already not-exciting song (but probably has great lyrics). (MA)
(Phantom)

FASHIONISM – "Back In The Day / One Shot"

Fans of the TRANZMITORS will immediately recognize singer Jeff on these two tracks of high-energy power pop. Hooks, choruses, and toe-tapping rhythms by people who clearly know what they're doing. Job done. (AM)
(Neon Taste)

FEEDTIME – "Gas" LP

FEEDTIME's unique power is one of the pivotal wonders in all of Australian rock'n'roll, no question about it. As with so much music from the region, the band's main drive is of the barreling, gruff variety, and not without moments of scree and noise to boot. With all that though, there's an immeasurable amount of heart in their playing, something that separates them from mere noise mongers and elevates them beyond abrasion. You can hear their real rock'n'roll on *Gas*, the band's first new album in 20 years. Their throbbing, strangled DIY blues is as potent as ever, with moments like "Lies" and "You Don't Mind" charting as high as anything on their '80s / '90s releases. It's also a strange full-circle thrill to see them working with Mikey from TOTAL CONTROL here. I'm betting that they'll find many more welcome ears in 2017 than they did during their initial run, only proving they were right all along. Highest possible recommendation, folks. It doesn't get much better than this. (MC)
(In The Red)

FIRING SQUAD – "At Their Mercy" EP

Fuck, this is a beast! Furious, burly hardcore with raging leads that make the POISON IDEA comparison almost inevitable. The gruff, thick-necked vocals are extremely familiar, I'm so sure this guy's been in another band but I just can't put my finger on it. This is so... hardcore. Sweet circle-pit riffs, mosh-y breakdowns, crazy solos and those mean-ass vocals. It's great! Killer graphic design too—take off the Richmond address and this could pass for a No Future Records single from '83. (AU)
(Agitate)

FNU CLONE INC. – "Binary Or Die" LP

On his debut solo outing, our favorite FNU RONNIES executive details dystopia with atom-bomb power. There is a resignation toward oblivion present throughout *Binary Or Die* and an overwhelming sense of (evil) panic, driven by every goddamn buzzin' scree-generator imaginable: blasting drums (real and synthetic), sparking electrode fuckery, guitar strangulation (banjo cameo!) and maniac vom-vocals. It's all trash-compacted into a perfect hate cube, executed with a level of detail, sincerity and force that places Mr. Clone alongside the elite mutant punkers of our entirely fucked day and age. *Binary Or Die* is also the most severe record released by Total Punk to date: fifteen heavily-treated kitchen sink jammers, split into side-long suites of ultra-punking. Epic and fucked, so pony up now and get ready to bleed! (MC)
(Total Punk)

FUNERAL CONE – "Turn Me On Dead Man" LP

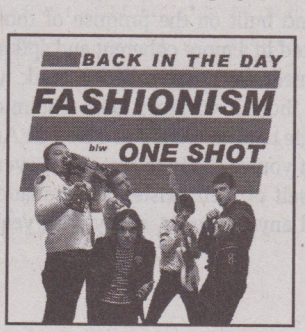
This comes to us from Providence, RI, but the overall vibe of this high concept organ-driven group makes me think more of LA. It lands somewhere between HUMAN SEXUAL RESPONSE and one of the later Paul Roessler projects—less pummeling than the SCREAMERS for sure, but also not as egregiously funky as TWISTED ROOTS. The songs on this are pretty up-tempo for the most part, to the point of being a little same-y despite all the intricate riffing and counterintuitive arrangements. I dig it when things slow down and change meter a little bit—the waltz-time intro to "Legion Arms" almost sounds like a clip of a lost Xpressway Records reel before snapping back into the LOST SOUNDS / HUNCHBACK grid. High-level attention to detail here, between a quite nice three color insert and a couple gimmicks such as making the B-side of this one-sided LP the same as the flip…but in played in reverse. Those who dug last year's VCR LP might want to take a trip south of the border to catch this one. (EW)
(100% Breakfast!)

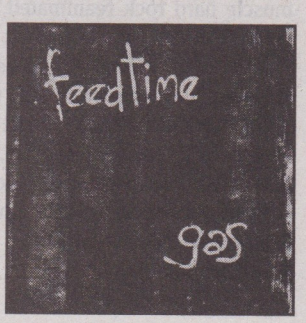
THE GARTRELLS – "Been Thinkin'" EP

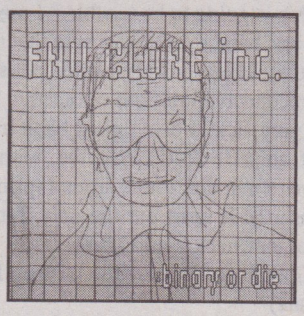
The GARTRELLS is Jared Swilley from BLACK LIPS with brother Jonah, GAYE BLADES' John Kang, and Rod Hamdallah of the LEGENDARY SHACK SHAKERS. It's an Atlanta super group, if you must. The music is crooner garage rock with a hipster vibe. It's laid-back, jangly rock with harmonies. It sounds pleasant enough and the songs are fairly catchy, but there is something disingenuous about it. It's like someone is winking behind my back. (CK)
(Arkam)

GINO AND THE GOONS – "Bastard" 10"

My older sister once wandered into a GINO AND THE GOONS set at a punk fest I made her go to in New Orleans and walked out about five minutes later. "I feel like I'm in an adult Warped Tour or something," she said. She's a PhD candidate and I've never been to the Warped Tour so I'm going to assume that she was right and that a trio of old (above 35 at least) men must have jumped on the Vans stage at some point to play MOTÖRHEAD covers in the style of the







OBLIVIANS. Given all that and that this record has been issued on the gatefold 10" format (the spread includes tour flyers, a photo op with Lemmy, and pinup playing cards, naturally), I wasn't expecting to dig it too much, but it's actually pretty good, at least as far as shambling mid-tempo garage-y bar rock goes. It's loose in the sense that even the tambourine player—really the easiest instrument to play this side of the triangle—falls out of time at some point. Maybe the 10" isn't such a bad format as I'm sure this would wear out its welcome with me after a couple more minutes of running time. (EW)
(Red Lounge)

GINO AND THE GOONS – "Po Boy / Hello Josephine"

Two blown-out, raucous, energetic garage punk songs here. Loud, fun, beer-soaked, and sweaty. Just the way a rock'n'roll single should be. Top marks for GINO. (AM)
(Giveaway)

GOOD FRIEND – "Ride The Storm" CD

An Irish band who moved to the UK and come to us now on a US label. This trio reminds me of early TAKING BACK SUNDAY and THURSDAY, before those bands got typecast as "emo." Production-wise this has a good raw feel with lots of chops and tempo changes with mostly screaming vocals. So yes, it's punk not emo. I liked this a lot. (RL)
(Red Scare)

THE GUILLOTINES – "Heads Will Roll" LP

Yet another group of has-beens (seasoned veterans) choose to adopt the often used moniker of the GUILLOTINES and suck on the dead diseased cock of STIV BATORS and co. Songs like "Dead Brains" are complete lawsuit-worthy rip-offs while others are just Max's Kansas City namedropping glam rock punk slop. Honestly, they're not bad at it, but I really don't need another slab to throw on the pile of dirty rigs, creepers, lipstick, and vinyl after a good night with WAYNE COUNTY. Fuck off. (RO)
(Just 4 Fun)

GULAG BEACH – "Apocalyptic Beats" LP

Sonically speaking, this is a produced hybrid of the canonical UK82 warhead riding and creeper-clad beach-centric punkisms. Two proven-effective modes by which the apocalypse can be discussed with great validity, right? With that, the organizing principle here is the end of the goddamn world, complete with tunes that examine the myriad forces at play that will drive each and every one of us toward certain death as soon as possible. A bit much and a bit same-y to take all in one sitting, though I played it front to back and survived. Maybe there's hope? Doubtful. (MC)
(Phantom)

HELLMOUTH – "Oblivion" CD

Well, well, well, if it isn't HELLMOUTH. This is thrashing, gnarly, and blackened. It rattles like a snake and lashes like a snake's tongue. Streetwise hardcore, '90s metal, and '80s thrash all smashed together with POISON IDEA punk roots, and some Southern headbanger intoxication. Good shit if you're looking for trouble. (JR)
(Fastbreaks)

HEZ – "Esclavos" 12"

Holy shit, I am so happy. I basically wake up every day hoping to hear a new hardcore punk band as unreservedly venomous and demented as Panama's HEZ, but most days are a bitter disappointment on this front. But today has been a good day, because I've been listening to HEZ's debut record, and it is an absolute beast. Dark and blown out riffs, tupa-tupa drum parts that sound as though they were recorded in a tunnel, and a bananas sounding vocalist who sounds ripped straight off an '80s Italian hardcore cassette or a mid-2000s Mexico City hardcore record. The lyrics and artwork for this 12"—the latter of which is by Yecatl of INSERVIBLES / TERCER MUNDO fame—are bleak and unsparing, and provide a perfect companion for HEZ's music. An early entry for the best of 2017 records list I've already started writing in my mind. (GN)
(Discos Enfermos / Logica Ciega / World Gone Mad)

HOMEBODY – "Better Use of Leisure Time" LP

It's not easy to get a handle on this LP, apparently the second from this Denver group: I was all buckled up for a record of modular synth deep space exploration after an intro in the style of my man VANGELIS, with distant samples of film dialogue in other languages (or maybe from *Trailer Park Boys* or maybe just voice messages for one of the dudes in this band) and out-of-step drum programming. Then you're hit with something that sounds like a late aughts Ride the Snake Records-style indie rocker group tried to write something in the vein of late '70s JOHN CALE, followed up by some *154*-era Wire / THIS MORTAL COIL textures to, then some more synth experimentation more akin to WEEN (not a diss). The tracks vacillate between these points with no specific rhyme or reason, but overall the production and almost-proggy tendencies of the guitar lines on this thing makes me think of XTC or THIS HEAT. HOMEBODY don't have quite the same eerie melodic vision of the latter group, but there are a lot of pieces here (including the unassuming and a little dorky vocal style) that make me picture at least one member of this group as an absent minded but charming composition major shut-in. Not the punkest record in these pages this month and difficult to tell if I find it adventurous or annoying but if any of this sounds appealing why not pay HOMEBODY a visit? (EW)
(Heavy Dose)

HOUSEWIVES – "New York Reissue" LP

Taking the guitar grind of TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS and putting it into a stiffened and sickly RANK/XEROX bag, this thrives on seasick mechanical movements, stretched tight and anxious. The guitar and bass collude together to create a churning machine while the drums and vocals serve to be the detritus flying off of it and vice versa. It lives in the same house as SEDIMENT CLUB and also THROBBING GRISTLE. It's DEVO ungoofed, leaving only their most bleak and industrial moments. The sound of repetitive clatter as psychedelic drone. (MM)
(Ever/Never)

IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO – "Idiota Civilizzato" EP

Hot off the trail of their rambunctious demo tape comes another dose of flailing Italian hardcore-inspired punk from Berlin. It's all about the naturally raw and loose vocals, unhinged energy, and the snare drum splat. Anyone can very specifically or broadly attempt a style or emulate a regional sound from any era (and many are doing so), but few seem to be able to make a hardcore record that sounds this cool. No awkward effects or overtly intentional homage here (except for the cover art, see the first CHEETAH CHROME MOTHERFUCKERS single). Five completely marvelous wild rippers and two slower repetitive dirges—but why would you play slow when you could just play fast?! (MA)
(Static Shock)

THE INVISIBLE TEARDROPS / THE WINSTONS – split EP

Two songs each from these bands, and it sounds like each song was recorded in a different studio to boot. Although I'm already a fan of INVISIBLE TEARDROPS' previous one-mic-in-the-room sound, I gotta admit that the produced sound they went for on this here first track is killer. You probably already know that the line of distinction between the lead singer Jamie's many bands is becoming pretty damn invisible these days but his soulful, country tinged tunes have always been stellar. The WINSTONS from Japan play some rock hybrid that shows a love of Otis and Mr. Childish. I can't say I'm losing my shit over this rock'n'roll stuff they're doing, but you know, I can get turned off by rock pretty quickly. This is a definite grab for fans of Jamie Barrier's output, and all of you Snuffy Smile completists are gonna shit your shoes over this. (DZ)
(Snuffy Smile)

JANELLE – "Fault Lines" LP

JANELLE are certainly aiming for a very open-ended shoegaze / indie rock sound, but ultimately, this record sounds just too polished and slick and the songs too well aimed at mainstream appeal to gain any traction with me. Guitar uncles the world over will drool over all the *sick tone* that this record freely offers up, but if you're looking for something challenging or with some feeling of underground grit, you wont find it here. (LP)
(FDH / Rockstar)

KOMPLIKATIONS – "Humans" 12"

Six tracks of contemporary Belgian synth punk that sometimes sounds like Oi! and sometimes like haunted house music. There's also an element of circus punk that francophone punks seem to execute better than anyone else. The synth is not employed just to enhance the sound, but replaces all the instruments except for drums. Five of the songs are sung in English (with lyrics included on the insert) and one in French. Personally, I like my punk with guitar, but to each their own. This is sincere—dare I say "human"—and inoffensive. (LT)
(Rockstar)

LIMP BLITZKRIEG – "Wypierdalać!" LP

When I saw the name LIMP BLITZKRIEG I was like, "Aw man! This is going to be terrible." I mean, why would you remind me of the worst band ever? I was sure that this was going to be some kind of not funny jokey powerviolence bullshit, or worse. Fortunately, all of my preconceived notions about this band were wrong. They are actually a very sick D-beat / crust band from Warsaw, Poland. They have a bit of an AUS-ROTTEN vibe, with vicious female vocals and anarcho lyrics that don't fuck around (printed in four different languages on the insert!). It turns out the only thing that sucks about this band is their name. Check it out! (BA)
(Contraszt / Domovitoe Distro / La Humanidad Es La Plaga / Trujaca Fala)

LYSOL – "Wired / Knucklehead"

Christmas came early! Seattle's LYSOL gives us two perfect stomp-y, growly tracks, a modern take on the STOOGES and DEAD BOYS. "Wired" is my favorite, but they're both great and I can't wait to break my nose moshing to this shit live. (AB)
(Total Punk)

MAKE-OVERS – "Try Me" LP

I will have to say I am not crazy about the band name. It's a bit too generic for the cool music on this LP. It's fuzzy, panicky rock. It's really got a groove. The band is a South African duo adding some driving, off-beat rhythms to their otherwise laid-back style and softly spoken lyrics. It sounds really nice. (CK)
(Heel Turn)

MAN AGAINST MAN – "Speed, Power and Aggression" CD

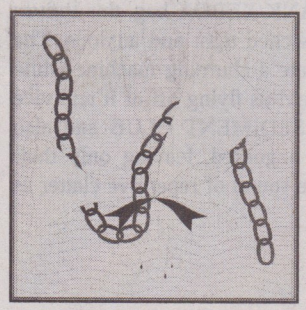
Some hard rocking fastcore from Japan. The guitar player sounds like he really likes classic rock radio hits. It's tasty licks for days, man. I'm probably more likely than most here at *MRR* to be into that kind of thing, but this dude is killing me. Other than that it sounds like early NYHC with blastbeats. If you like AGNOSTIC FRONT's first couple albums and bad GUNS N' ROSES cover bands, then this one's for you. (BA)
(Superlame)

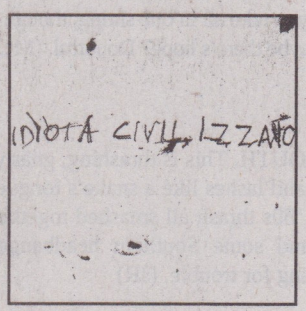
MEMORY LOSS – "Blackout" EP

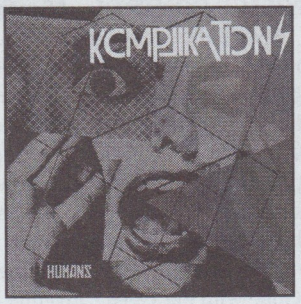
More killer Richmond hardcore this month! Must be something in the water out there. MEMORY LOSS is an interesting beast, adding some rad rocked-out swaggering leads to their straightforward heavy hardcore attack. The super-pissed vocals keep things angry (great lyrics too!), as the band swings from stomping hardcore to more freaked-out noise parts. While they're in no way identical bands, I get a lot of the same vibe I got off of RITUAL CONTROL from MEMORY LOSS, which is definitely a good thing. (AU)
(Vinyl Conflict)

MISLED YOUTH – "Excuse for Existence" EP

Jesus, this record is fucking amazing. It's like breaking your arm over and over. It's like when my roommate told me he loved skateboarding cuz he vibes on the pain. A continuous bloody nose. The feeling when you throw something through glass and it shatters and you realize that







you don't know what you enjoy more, seeing something break or the act itself. I don't feel like comparing it to something, because I don't wanna ruin it, but if I had to I'd say it sounds like the first BLANK STARE EP. Seriously can't wait for more. (MW)
(Caught Up / Society Bleeds)

MOB 47 – "Carnival in Rio" flexi

This is a weird one, but I'll fuckin' take it! One new song (the title track) recorded in 2005 and four ancient demo tracks with Per (DISCARD) on vocals in a lineup that never did a proper recording. "Carnival in Rio" is actually a really good fucking song—the chorus is catchy enough that you'll be singing along by the second time it comes around. The other four, it should go without saying, are fucking mandatory. They're available on bootlegs here and there, but I've never heard them in this quality before and they're a stark reminder of just how fucking great MOB 47 were (are!). Ultra-fast and insanely catchy in a way that no other band that was going this speed in the early '80s was capable of. You know you need this. (AU)
(Insane Society)

MOD VIGIL – LP

Punk-y garage from Melbourne, Australia. This is way cool. High-energy and desperate sounding. Catchy and pulsating. "Driving Is Easy" may be the hit and reminds me of early COSMIC PSYCHOS. Excellent. (CK)
(X-Mist)

MORAL PANIC – LP

Daniel Kelly, formerly of local heroes the COMPLAINTS, returns with some of his New York pals. If you're a fan of the aforementioned, you'll dig this for sure. The winners on here—"Harbor Fitness," "Edged," and "Ripped Jeans"—are that nice trash bag of power pop, garage, and beach punk. REGISTRATORS, CLOROX GIRLS, and the CROWD wouldn't be far off, but spend a buck and decide for yourself. (RO)
(Slovenly)

MOVING TARGETS – "The Other Sides: Demos and Sessions" LP

I'm pissed. I fucking love MOVING TARGETS and I slept on ordering this record, which is in Boss Tuneage's "made to order" series—meaning they only pressed enough to cover the orders received before a certain date. In other words, you probably slept on it too! At any rate, this record compiles demo tracks from 1983 and 1985, as well as radio sessions from '86, '88, and 2007(!), and an outtake from the recording of the *Burning In Water* LP. Like contemporaries HÜSKER DÜ and MISSION OF BURMA, MOVING TARGETS were pioneers on the migration from hardcore to college rock, but these raw, loose recordings capture them at their best. Good luck finding this. Maybe if there's enough demand Boss Tuneage will give it a proper release. (AM)
(Boss Tuneage)

NEGATIVE ELEMENT – "Shouts of Rebellion 1982-1983" LP

Alona's Dream continues to remind the world that the Chicago punk scene of olde had more than two punk bands (EFFIGIES and NAKED RAYGUN, duh). Not sure why NEGATIVE ELEMENT never got the nod—their *Yes, We Have No Bananas!* fits squarely into 1983 timeframe. I'm still haunted by a hand-colored version of the banana sleeve I didn't buy off a wall. NEGATIVE ELEMENT stand out to me as the most DIY and unpolished hardcore punk band of the early Chicago scene, cranking up the speed to inept thrash levels, spawning proto goof-core lyricism that opened the floodgates for future scene stalwarts like RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED or SCREECHING WEASEL. Where most Midwestern scenes' second and third tier bands are rightly forgotten for weak poorly recorded EPs, NEGATIVE ELEMENT is def an underrated scorcher, if a bit inconsistent. A-side tracks are from their 1982 demo which are rawer and less produced, and to these ears preferable, unless you're one of the few with their 7" EP burned in their brain. Banana yellow colored wax, though there's also black vinyl out there. (GB)
(Alona's Dream)

NIGHT SHAPES – "Run" 12"

If you look at a record, like actually look at the grooves on the platter, you can sometimes guess what you're in for. Some records have lots of tracks crammed in tight. If that's the case, you know the songs are short and probably fast. That is usually a good thing. This record has big spaces and few tracks. Therefore, I deduced that the songs would be long and spaced out. I was not wrong. NIGHT SHAPES play fuzzed-out, psychedelic garage rock with a lot of delay and effects. When they get loud and lock into a groove they start to pick up a head of steam but it gets a bit meandering for me. Fans of recent OH SEES releases would probably dig. (AM)
(Heavy Dose)

NOSEBLEED – "Lowlife" EP

Richmond, VA's NOSEBLEED plays solid if unspectacular modern American hardcore with a tinge of guitar-laden Scandinavian influence, the occasional D-beat, and a mosh part or two. This four-song EP, their first vinyl release after an earlier demo, features angry, personal lyrics on classically hardcore themes: alienation, fake friends, and being sick of it all. There is even a song called "My Rules" for good measure. The vocalist is pretty convincing, with a menacing and memorable delivery, and there are a couple of decent riffs scattered throughout. I will not likely ever feel compelled to play this record again after finishing this review, but I would probably go see this band if they happened to roll through my town. (GN)
(Vinyl Conflict)

OBEDIENCE – "Cut Throat" EP

Makes sense that this shares members with TEAR IT UP, because that's the first band that came to mind. This is heavily reminiscent of that late '90s / '00s resurgence of hardcore marked by bands like CHRONIC SEIZURE, or DIRECT CONTROL's first EP. I definitely found myself drumming along the entire time I was jamming this record and can

definitely see why the demo was worth putting to wax. I also found myself playing "Wiped Clean" a few times. Great new band. (MW)
(Fair Warning)

ÖTZI – "Gong Show / Sunbeam"

I can't decide which side I like better. If you dig the dark *and* (heavy on the) dreamy side of post-punk, you're definitely gonna need to grab this Bay Area trio's vinyl debut. The drums are sturdy and the guitar, bass, and keyboards all interplay in the most wonderfully majestic ways. Each member contributes vocally, all delivered passionately. It's gothy while still being super catchy. The recording / mix suits them perfectly. This group is also a total pleasure to catch live, especially if you wanna see some impressive up-stroking on the bass. Totally dig this. Obscure band comparison of the day: Austria's ASTARON. (MA)
(Long Way To Go)

THE PEACOCKS – "Flamingo" CD

This is a rockabilly influenced rock'n'roll band from Switzerland—there is no mistaking the stand up bass in the mix. This is a bit slick and stays pretty roots rock tempo-wise. I'm hearing some BLASTERS and rocking DWIGHT YOAKAM. Not my favorite genre but this trio is pretty good at it. (RL)
(Concrete Jungle)

PISSWAND – "Panic Mode" EP

This Seattle three-piece rocks us with what I can only call grunge crust. Has anyone used that yet? I always wanted to coin a phrase… create a genre...name a sandwich? It's heavy, sludgy, pained, and screamy. It's NAUSEA and GREEN RIVER—or maybe they just sound like KARP. Well, it ain't half bad. Now I gotta go and do some tweets or somethin'... (RO)
(self-released)

PLASTIC TONES – "More Trouble" EP

Modern Finnish fuzzy power pop that could have been dragged out of a *Powerpearls* compilation. Something about it (clean guitars? stark drumming?) is making me think of that first TERRIBLE FEELINGS record, but PLASTIC TONES don't carry that underlying current of darkness. It still has that same urgency but lies just on the other side of the pop fence. It's melodic as fuck and will stay stuck in your head. (GH)
(PML)

PLASTIC TONES – "The Eyes / Boring Party"

The A-side of this 45 is dreamy enough to turn Clare Grogan into *Gregor's Girl* all over again; imagine a more power pop take on the FLATMATES's "I Could Be in Heaven" with a pilled up frantic mod girl out on the town dance floor attack feel! Impossibly catchy pop perfection, would fit on a JAM / DOLLY MIXTURE tour in 1981...The B-side is more classic trad dad power pop style, but damn! That A-side is a slice of nostalgic reverie that will make you grab your op art dress and get all Bridget Riley all over the place. (LG)
(Mono Mono)

POLICE CONTROL – "Sentimental" EP

Shambolic French male / female two-piece that really remind me of both RIXE and PIERRE ET BASTIEN in a most affecting manner… Really charming / simple but effective bashed out punk anthems for disaffected reality crashers. The melodies are relentless to the point where they could almost be wimpy power poppers, with an early almost glam tinge, but the manner in which they are delivered makes them a force to be reckoned with for. Despite the goofy Burger-sounding name this label has put out a couple sick 45s…Parisian punks gonna grab your spare change on the double. (LG)
(Gone with the Weed / Juvenile Delinquent)

POSERS – "Exist" EP

It's like I'm in the middle of a hurricane blowing this damned tree around. It's bowed pretty bad. It's teetering from mega promising snotty sneering punk one second, then it almost snaps into overly wankin' territory. Don't get me wrong, I can appreciate a band showing off chops, but this is a bit much at times. For those readers who like a little of the melodic intrusion, I say go for it. The vocalist is killer, and the more aggressive moments are worth suffering through the rock solos and whoa whoa whoas. (DZ)
(Enthrall)

POW! – "Crack An Egg" LP

I've been watching a lot of *Night Flight*, the '80s USA Television Network series lately (get the app if you don't have it). POW! seems exactly like one of the bands that pop up on one of their segments. I surprisingly have never heard of them, yet I really enjoy it. This is synth pop music with an extra '80s sound. It's catchy while still being weird. The male vocalist reminds me of PETER MURPHY while the female vocalist reminds me of TERRI NUNN. They sound really nice together. *Crack An Egg* is album number three for POW! "Back On The Grid" is my favorite tune. (CK)
(Castle Face)

POWER – "Electric Glitter Boogie" LP

This came out a little over a year ago in Australia and In The Red reissues it here faithfully for Trumpland. I can't give this record enough praise. Pure dirthead degenerate '70s / early '80s Aussie hard rock that's punker than punk. I've read a lot of comparisons to COLOURED BALLS and I can hear a little "Devil's Disciple" here but songs like my fave "Slimy's Chains" or the title track are pure *Powerage* era AC/DC punk with some ANGEL CITY / ANGELS and BUSTER BROWN thrown in. Fronted by a singer that has the perfect pint of razors Aussie growl, like a young Ross Knight, this just flat out rocks from start to finish and is the sound of pure trouble. Bail money not included. (RO)
(In The Red)

PRETTY HURTS – LP

Obviously, it still rules to ape the WIPERS and write a bunch of songs at the same medium-fast tempo, with the same driving rock beat, and then slap them all on an LP so you can listen to them and zone the

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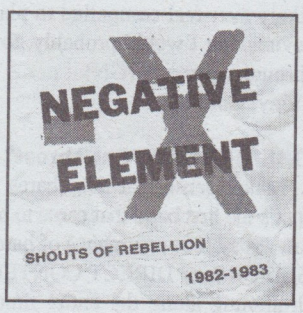
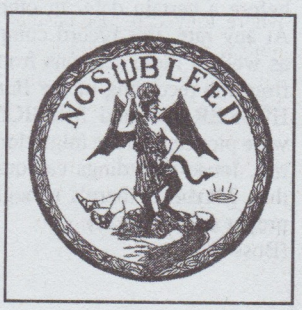
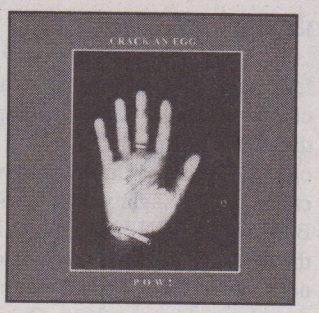






fuck out. Records so unified in their rhythm are just easy to put on and flip over and over and over. PRETTY HURTS do that, and add a little British post punk glower à la SIOUXSIE and BAUHAUS. The record oozes smoothly and pleasantly along, and when the boys from Berlin break it up a little, like with the staggered beat of "Beat On You," it draws favorable attention. Under these driving punk songs is a touch of pop sense, very reserved and used sparingly and smartly. A tasteful and rewarding record. Top marks. (LP)
(Rockstar)

PRO PUBLICO BONO – "Drop By Drop I Squeeze A Slave Of Myself" LP

These Polish punks, residing in London, blend their native Slavic tongue with the UK peace punk legacy to create something vital and urgent. Stylistically, it's impossible not to feel the ghosts of most of the Crass Records catalogue, CHUMBAWAMBA, and CRASS themselves throughout this album. The dual female / male vocals and frequent trumpet have a nostalgic yet necessarily current feel. With the spreading rise in nationalist sentiments in the UK, and around the world, it's heartening to find music and scenes being created in the face of it. Aside from the title track, PRO PUBLICO BONO sing in their native Polish, yet anyone without an ear for their language but a knowledge of the genre will know exactly what they're shouting. The peak of everything that is wonderful about this record is concentrated in "Sami Szykujemy Sobie Piekło / We Prepare Hell For Us." The intro trumpet, energized chanting vocals, and references to Orwell's *1984* form the tornado of forces that make the song stand out among ten equally crucial tracks. (RH)
(Pasażer)

PROTESTSTORM – "Tidens Malande Tänder" EP

Crusty hardcore from Sweden. The vocals are in the vein of SKITSYSTEM but not as brutal and the beats are more thrash with some blasts thrown in than actual d-beat. I don't know, if you're going to do this kind of style, please do it really well. The riffs just aren't there for me. I'll pass on this one. (JC)
(Insane Society)

RANDOM CONFLICT – "Black List" CD

Alabama's RANDOM CONFLICT have continued to keep it real since their 1987 inception (30 years!) and have reached that point where they can just basically do anything they want and get away with it. Only six short songs on this one and they forge on with their vicious hardcore attack, employing shorts bursts of crossover metal and NYHC-style breakdowns. In their usual style, they don't refer to any specific events, but the lyrics allude to a crumbling, decaying world destroyed by capitalism and greed. All bleak. Defying the odds of punk, RANDOM CONFLICT have only gotten better with age. (GH)
(Cat Factory / No Profit)

RANK/XEROX – "M.Y.T.H." 12"

It's nice to have RANK/XEROX back. At one time my favorite San Francisco act, I was disappointed when they dispersed to Los Angeles and Australia and subsequently went on extended hiatus. This record picks up right where they left off, at the intersection of WIRE and MISSION OF BURMA with an undercurrent of Dangerhouse LA art damage. There's definitely a more punk edge to RANK/XEROX than to David West's solo work or RAT COLUMNS releases, probably attributable to Jon Shade and Kevin McCarthy's propulsive rhythm section. The addition of synths and the motorik beat of the last track suggest West's collaborators TOTAL CONTROL in places. A welcome return. (AM)
(Adagio830)

RAYS – LP

Oakland's RAYS start off their very good debut LP with a question that anyone from San Francisco to London has probably caught themselves asking at least once: "Wouldn't it be nice to live in the attic?" The band's collective CV includes work in the WORLD, LIFE STINKS, DADFAG, and many more, but the result doesn't bring those groups to mind—or many other contemporary bands for that matter—as much as a mix of equal parts SIMPLY SAUCER, VELVET UNDERGROUND, and the CHILLS. There's lot to savor here, such as the guitar playing on tunes like "Gambler" or "Theater of Lunacy" (Morrison / Reed caliber interplay over a despondent three chord riff). The way that the codas of "Drop Dead" and "Made of Shadows" spiral into a sheet of noise is also great, suggesting a labyrinth of sound well beyond the songs' sub-three minute running time (I'm picturing an elbow leaning on an old Hammond organ, a drink spilled onto an old Buchla synth dug up from the junkyard). I'm going to presume the label blew their production budget on filing LLC paperwork and couldn't spare funds for a lyric insert but there are some great lines on on the traps and distractions that keep us moving around here in the Bay Area. From "Lost in a Cage": *"Roller coaster of fantastic events / there's always something happening / when I'm awake I'm very bored / dreams took over of their own accord / when I'm awake I'm saving money for rent."* Great stuff. (EW)
(Trouble in Mind)

THE REAL MCKENZIES – "Two Devils Will Talk" CD

For a quarter century now, this sextet have been bringing a wee bit of Scotland to North America and beyond. Though throughout their previous nine full-length efforts, the bagpipes have acted more as an additional (melodic, would you believe!?) instrument, rather than the progenitor of a more "traditional" approach to music. Fortunately, there's been nary a jig, reel, or martial march. While there was the occasional foray into renditions of traditional songs, and the occasional acoustic effort, this, their tenth LP, has virtually none of the above. It's definitely their most melodic punk effort to date, and sounds like *Recipe for Hate* era BAD RELIGION (albeit with bagpipes), replete with layered harmony vocals, and Gurewitz-esque lead guitar flourishes—which is a roundabout way of saying that this fucking rocks. (RK)
(Fat Wreck)

REDD KROSS / SIDE EYES – "Songs That Chargo Taught Us" EP

Oh man, sakes alive, I wanted to hate this so bad! SIDE EYES is fronted by the daughter of one of the REDD KROSS dudes, so you probably already knew they were eventually going to put music out together. On this record, each band plays songs written by former GO-GO and mother of one band member / partner of another band member, and it's pretty sweet, actually. SIDE EYES is probably going to get more than a few L7 comparisons. Probably not right up the alley of the average *MRR* reader, but punk-tinged glam isn't the worst thing I've had to hear today. If you are a REDD KROSS fan, you already know they've still got it, and you probably already went online and bought this as soon as you heard their daughter was in a punk band, so there you go. This was surprisingly good. (DZ)
(In The Red)

REIZ – LP

Here's a challenge. Write a ten-song (plus) LP that retains the same energy, enthusiasm and catchiness from beginning to end. Easier said than done—but REIZ did it! They hail from Mannheim, Germany and I'm hearing elements of garage and Oi! (in energy and directness) along with possible influences from JAY REATARD, the LOVE TRIANGLE, and MARKED MEN. They carry that same urgency and on-the-verge-of-running-off-the-rails songwriting style. All the lyrics are in German with lots of group choruses. It's catchy as fuck and demands many repeated spins. (GH)
(Kink / Pifia / Spastic Fantastic)

REPTILE RANCH – LP

A cacophonous melee of wild sounds that somehow merge FRIPP guitars, taut / anarchic rhythms, and the joy / dark ironies inherent in groups such as SWELL MAPS and SCRITTI POLLITTI. An explosion of ideas and musical concepts, an action painting of a record that is uncontainable and somehow connects lines between the English folk tradition and the more surreal aspects of the post-Rough Trade Records youth explosion. This is a beautiful compilation of one of the early Welsh punk groups—you may have heard 'em on one of those *Messthetics* comps, or know about them because of the YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS connection, but either way, if you are intrigued by the possibilities inherent in past reflections of the punk idea combustion I admonish you to mail order this stat. (LG)
(C/Site)

REPTILIANS FROM ANDROMEDA – "Doomsday" EP

Killer new wave action from Turkey! Cool disaffected female vocals over atmospheric, downbeat yet seductive, skinny tie waver punk, falling somewhere between early BERLIN and NENA. It's somehow sleek and shambolic at the same time, an alluring combination. This label is gonna put out a bunch more Turkish punk, psyched to hear what else is in the future... (LG)
(Prof Sny)

REŻIM – "Demo 1992" LP

Here we have a vinyl a release of a lost demo by a thrash / punk band from early post-communist Poland. It's an interesting early document of a scene that I know nothing about. The little bit I found about these guys online said that they were influential in shaping the sound of early Polish hardcore. They walk the line between extra thrashing crossover and slightly melodic Southern Californian hardcore. It's like BAD RELIGION meets SLAYER. The thrash parts are ripping and the hardcore parts are pretty good, but the straight-up metal parts are not so great. Like, I could really do without the slow, chug along song that closes this record out. Overall, this is not bad, but probably only essential if you were there in '92. (BA)
(Black Wednesday / Make a Change / Pasażer)

RIK AND THE PIGS – "Don't Tell On Me / Gimme Mick"

Here's the third single from the oinkers de-jour, hitting with lotsa sparkles this go-around. "Don't Tell On Me" is T.REX zonked on gutter glue, an homage built on irresistible repeat-o-riffing that takes punk to the junkshop. "Gimme Mick" is a CANDY SLICE cover, the mere selection of which proves RIK's brains are more muscular than nearly any of his contemporaries. Far too cool and the exact sort of garbage glory that can transform glam wimps into punk demons. RIK shits hits. (MC)
(Total Punk)

RUBY – "Deadlock" EP

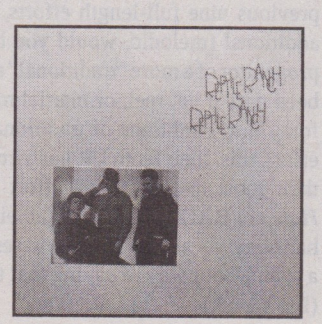
Fun and catchy punk that's just a touch too heavy to be considered pop punk. Imagine if MASSHYSTERI spent the last few years in Germany and listened to nothing but JAY REATARD's *Blood Visions*. Members of IDLE HANDS and BLANK PAGES. It totally rips, and comes in a cool screen-printed sleeve. (FS)
(Rockstar)

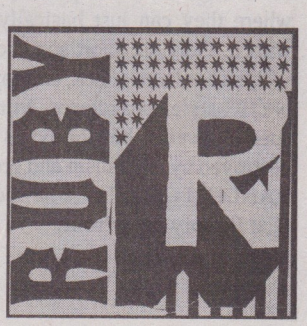
SALVATION – "Sore Loser" CD

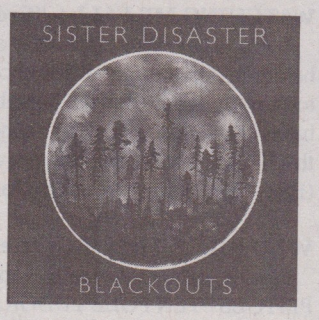
Chicago noise rock with big JESUS LIZARD and AmRep vibes, but when the singer howls / yells, they sound like a dead ringer for *Bleach*-era NIRVANA. They have a really big, well-produced sound, but it just reminds me of the '90s, which I already lived through once. If you didn't live through that, get this. This is what it felt like. (GH)
(Forge Again)

SANTA ANA KNIGHTS – "Knight Skool" EP

If I didn't know that this was the new project from Davey Tiltwheel, I would assume it was just some JAWBREAKER-worship band. This EP sounds like what you would expect from TILTWHEEL around 25 years into their existence. No real surprises, just straightforward beard punk to wear shorts and drink cheap beer to. "I'll be the bartender when you need to talk" is not an original thought, but it is a lyric that I sincerely enjoy every time I hear it. (RH)
(Red Brontosaurus)







SE VENDE – "Regular" LP

SE VENDE is a gritty pop punk band from San Diego that sounds like they were taken straight out of a '90s skate park. This is their second record. It's kinda poppy and catchy and the vocalists are pretty good. Once in a while they throw in a little darkness. The vocals range from snotty and throaty to emotional. This album really seems to be covering most of the pop punk bases. Reminds me of California bands like NOFX, FIFTEEN, and JAWBREAKER. (DB)
(self-released)

THE SEX ORGANS – "Intergalactic Sex Tourists" CD

If the name doesn't already give it away, the SEX ORGANS have a gimmick. Their songs, costumes, and presentation are encompassed by it. It could get old really quick if it weren't for the fun, catchy songs. It's upbeat garage rock with a joyous attitude and an active libido. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

SHORT ORDER – "Smash All Taggers" EP

Here we have a serving of straight-up fastcore out of Cleveland. They take basic old school USHC riffs and add blastbeats. It's not thrash, it's not powerviolence, but it is fast and raw. I like that there are bands playing this kind of thing, but these guys don't really stand out much. If you must have more fastcore now, these guys will do. (BA)
(self-released)

SISTER DISASTER – "Blackouts" EP

Totally brutal and addictive deathrock out of Finland. It's as if you combined a totally blown-out ARCTIC FLOWERS with the instrumental sensibilities of the early CURE records. Lyrics of pain and despair, with music to mirror the words conveyed. This will leave you depressed and hungry for more. Bring this with you when you go to that dark place. (FS)
(Several Casualties / Shill / Soul Rokker)

SKINNY GIRL DIET – "Heavyflow" LP

All hail to '90s punky grunge. Think L7, a helluva heaping spoonful of NIRVANA that gives two middle fingers anyone who doesn't love all that fuzzed out glitter and grit shoved down their throat. It's raw and fresh even though it's utterly drenched in Seattle style. Definitely sounds like something that could come out on Starcleaner Records. The cover of "Heavyflow" offers up a nice visual juxtaposition of a polished veneer of glamour, all white satin and diamonds, with the stain of menstrual blood on the bodies of these femme Brit POC punx. (CR)
(Happy Happy Birthday to Me)

SLUTET – "När Helvetet Brunnit Mot Sitt Slut" LP

Like a fine wine, this is an aged Swedish käng sound with loads of groove that takes cues from SKITSYSTEM, ACURSED, and WARCOLLAPSE. It already sounds so classic that during this review session I have a feeling I'll return to this with even greater appreciation. Kenko of Swedish HC fame recorded this and guest solos on it as well. (JR)
(Insane Society)

SOGGY CREEP – "Shallow Drownings" 12"

Gloomy punk band out of Olympia. This six-song mini-album straddles the line between deathrock and post-punk. At times you get a KILLING JOKE vibe, but at others it seems more similar to late '80s (pre-breakout) Seattle grunge. Although the flanger is in full effect, it never quite goes into goth territory—much more rock than death. A solid soundtrack for dreary days and dreary attitudes. (FS)
(Conditions)

SOMERSET MEADOWS – "We Will Rock" EP

I won't lie. Although technically I don't think I like this, two of these tracks are pretty killer. It's super nerdy and quirky, the bass player and drummer sound like they might not have ever been in the same room together, the singer has an annoying voice, I don't think they know what direction they want the band to go in...all the things I generally love, I know, but I just can't do it. It's like if someone thought they figured out the formula for ONION FLAVORED RINGS, but made a huge calculation error and tried to just run with it anyway, hoping nobody would notice. Maybe they tried to cover it up with studio work and over the top rock solos. I don't know, something doesn't smell right. Maybe I'll like the upcoming LP, and the two tracks I hated were just throwaways. I'm willing to admit that's a possibility. (DZ)
(Brain Genius)

THE SOPHISTICATES – "Reinvent The Wheel" CD

This band from PA sounds very late '80s to me. The era when punk people stopped playing fast punk and went college rock in search of that "120 Minutes" pipe dream. This is a bit sloppy with some off key vocals. I'm thinking Restless Records and Dutch East India bands. I didn't like this much. One of the guys was in GUN FURY who I don't remember from the '90s. I liked some of this stuff back then, DEAD MILKMEN, BLAKE BABIES, and so on. I just don't think this genre has held up over time. (RL)
(self-released)

THE STRAND – "Seconds Waiting" LP

Pretty cool reissue here—the STRAND was an early-'80s DC-area three-piece, though I can't imagine they shared the stage with any Dischord acts of the day. Originally released in 1983, *Seconds Waiting* offers a pleasantly garagey take on the British Invasion sound. The band gives BEATLES harmonies and WHO riffs a stripped-down, post-RAMONES makeover, embedding along with some organ flourishes a handful of memorable hooks among these eleven tracks (including one unreleased studio cut). While I'd guess this LP's audience is mostly limited to diehard power pop archivists—to make a slightly clumsy region-specific comparison, these guys were like the SECOND WIND to, say, RAZZ / TOMMY KEENE's MINOR THREAT—tracks like "Claim to Fame" or "You and Me" have a subtle but lasting appeal. (CS)
(Dig!)

TIMMY'S ORGANISM – "Lick Up Your Town / Sweet Tooth"

The latest single from Detroit's Timmy Vulgar (of HUMAN EYE renown, probably recognizable with a squid on his head in several of this magazine's in-house advertisements). This particular project started with a few couple scratchy, subnormal-bias grade LPs, but this record sounds more like they were pulled from a live set: no tape machine abstraction, relatively high fidelity. That said, I don't know if I'd be able to recognize these two songs by name if I walked into an ORGANISM gig. The B-side features a BO DIDDLEY beat and as such is objectively the better of the two tracks here. Not sure overall if this one is essential for more than the most obsessive of TIMMY VULGAR and / or Total Punk collectors, but it certainly fulfills the promise of roughly three to four minutes of satisfactorily scuzzy garage punk promised with each issue under the Total Punk imprint. (EW)
(Total Punk)

UPSIDE – "Nati Per Soffrire" EP

Fuck, this is fucking great. I'd never heard of this '80s hardcore band from Modena, Italy nor this 1983 EP reissued and replicated perfectly for you undeserving punks. Super primitive, guttural and primal. More on the lines of a punkier NABAT than a NEGAZIONE or RAW POWER. There are even some MOTÖRHEAD guitar wailing moments. I guess they went on to be long hairs in the '90s—no shock there. Not to be missed or ignored. (RO)
(No Good)

THE VIRUS – "System Failure" LP

Hmmmmm. I always thought these guys were a dumb fashion punk band, but this packaging—super-political lyrics and art plus a huge fold-out poster sleeve!—makes them look like the second coming of AUS-ROTTEN. The music is slickly produced poppy punk à la ANTI-FLAG with occasionally hair metal-influenced leads, but hey, give credit where it's due. This could easily be completely devoid of merit and instead it's got a valuable message that will hopefully reach some kids that would benefit from hearing it. (AU)
(Evacuate)

WARM BODIES – "My Burning Love" EP

The first thing that hits me about WARM BODIES is Olivia's wildly unhinged and vicious vocal style. It's hard to describe...like an alien melody that crescendos into a wild, shrill scream. It's got an understanding of hardcore but manages to skirt the lines around it. The rest of the band is holding it down in a different way than I've heard them before, playing around with hardcore but infusing it with dashes of funk (think MINUTEMEN, no slap bass) and snaky guitar rock (think VEXX and *Raw Power* STOOGES). In short, it's fucking tight. Along with their tape from this month (see demos section), they are forging an unstoppable path. Get this. (GH)
(Thrilling Living)

WATCHING ME FALL – "Crossroads" LP

Political emo hardcore is alive and well in Poland. This takes me back, before heavy shit like this was co-opted by Nike and Victory Records to move millions of units. Somehow I'm instead reminded of dimly lit basement hardcore shows I attended in the '90s. Kind of crazy to pull that off in 2017. Nice packaging with full color lyrics insert. (GB)
(Black Wednesday / Make a Change / Pasażer)

WHO KILLED BAMBI – "Generation" EP

Not at all what you'd expect from a band referencing SEX PISTOLS / TEN POLE TUDOR. Cleanly recorded, melodic punk from Germany with a tone-deaf snarly vocalist. Some of the hooks are nice, but the crispness and the Fat Wreck drums kill it for me. Part street punk, part pop punk, and completely forgettable cover art. (MA)
(self-released)

WITCH JAIL – "Slimewave, USA! / My Brain Is In The Cupboard (Above The Kitchen Sink)"

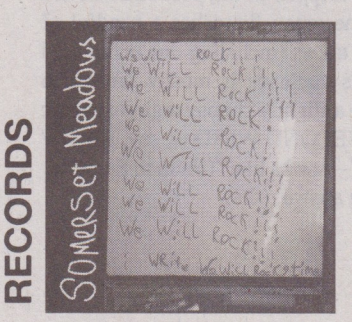
CRAMPS worship from Parts Unknown (by me, at least). Their slimy original is primitive and studied enough to warrant their inclusion in nearly any Halloween cover show, but a copy is a copy all the same. They hit it in spirit, which is a tiny victory. The flip is an ALIEN SEX FIEND ditty with maybe half a new breath added to it. Bigger kicks of this variety can most certainly be had elsewhere. (MC)
(Too Much Rock)

WŁOCHATY – "For Sale" LP

1991 cassette release from this long-running Polish band pressed to wax, re-mastered but still garage-raw. This is primitive stuff, reaching for the epic feel of CONFLICT but without that band's instrumental mastery. Really though, who the fuck is listening to punk to hear masterful musicians? The important thing is that the energy bleeds off these grooves with the same urgency that the band felt when they put these songs to tape decades ago. Some of these songs are fucking great, too: see the frantic guitar leads, passionate vocal trade-offs and building/crashing structure on "Sweet A" for definitive proof. The insert text is entirely in Polish, but it does include a great spread of vintage band photos for those of us who don't speak the language. Not the most essential of Polish reissues, but if you dig Polish punk or late '80s Mortarhate stuff this is right up your alley! (AU)
(Black Wednesday / Pasażer)

MARK WYNN – "A Tenner? I'll Do It Myself" EP

This is amazing, if only borderline *MRR*-appropriate. Imagine MARK E. SMITH / JOHN COOPER CLARKE spouting non-sequiturs over jangly, shambling rock. There's demented genius at work here not a million miles away from SMITH, DANIEL JOHNSTON, or a Northern English BEEFHEART. A less knowingly comedic HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT playing DESPERATE BICYCLES songs, perhaps? I'm going for the world record in musical reference bingo. It's just great, OK? (AM)
(Beau Travail / In A Car)



CONTACTS

Adagio830: Marchlewski Strasse 107, 10243 Berlin, GERMANY, adagio830.de
Agitate: PO Box 61014, Richmond VA 23261, USA
Animalize: animalize@gmx.at
Arkam: arkamrecords.net
Black Wednesday: info@blackwednesday.pl, black-wednesday.pl
Boss Tuneage: PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB, UK, bosstuneage.bigcartel.com
C/Site: csiterecordings.storenvy.com
Captain Three Leg: mortvillenoise@gmail.com
Castle Face: castlefacerecords.com, castlefacemailorder@gmail.com
Cat Factory: thecatfactorytn@gmail.com
Chaerno Roto Produciones: www.asmereir.com
Conditions: conditionsrecords.com
Contraszt: diyordie.net/
Creepeth: creepethupon@gmail.com
Dig!: 212-A Loudoun St. SE, Leesburg, VA 20175; digrecords.bigcartel.com, digrecordcompany@gmail.com
Driving: jdbuhl.com
Enthrall: enthrallrecords.com
Evacuate: evacuaterecords.com
Ever/Never: ever-never-records.tumblr.com
Fat Wreck: fatwreck.com
FDH: 522 Hoffman St, Philadelphia, PA, 19148, fdhmusic.com
Forge Again: forgeagainrecords.com
Giveaway: giveawayrecords.bandcamp.com
Gone with the Weed: gonewiththeweed.bandcamp.com
Heavy Dose: heavydoserecords.bandcamp.com
Heel Turn: heelturnrecords.com
HHBTM: PO Box 742, Athens, GA, 30603
In The Red: PO Box 50777, Los Angeles CA 90050, intheredrecords.com
Insane Society: insanesociety.net
Insane Society: PO Box 18, 50401 Novy Bydzov, CZECH REPUBLIC, insanesociety.net
Iron Lung: PO Box 80172, Seattle, WA 98108, ironlungrecords@hotmail.com, lifeironlungdeath.blogspot.com
Just 4 Fun: just4funrecords.bigcartel.com
Juvenile Delinquent: juveniledelinquent.bandcamp.com
Kink: kink-records.de
La Humanidad es la Plaga: musikaze.com/lahumanidadeslaplaga
Last Laugh: almostreadyrecords.com
Long Way To Go: otzi.bandcamp.com, longwaytogo.bigcartel.com
Mono Mono: monomonorrecords@gmail.com
Neon Taste: neontasterecords.bandcamp.com
No Profit: Noprofitrecords.com, noprofitrecords@hotmail.com
100% Breakfast!: PO Box 381804, Cambridge, MA 02238
Pasażer: PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3 POLAND, pasazer.pl, pasazer@pasazer.pl
Phantom Records: phantom-records.blogspot.com
Pifia: Pifiarecords.bandcamp.com, pifia.records@gmail.com
PissWand; facebook.com/PissWandBand
PML: Bengalinpolku 1 g 26, 00560, Helsinki, Finland, pikakelauksellamaailmanloppuun@gmail.com
Profs: profs.cz, info@profs.cz
Red Brontosaurus: redbrontosaurus.com
Red Lounge: redloungerecords.com
Rockstar: Viktoriastraße 51, 52066 Aachen, GERMANY, rockstarrecords.de, info@rockstarrecords.de
Rust and Machine: rustandmachine.com, rustandmachine@gmail.com
Sacramento: sacramentorecords.com
Short Order: bitteraboutlife@gmail.com
Slovenly: slovenly.com
Soul Rokker: soulrokker@gmail.com
Spacecase: spacecaserecords.com
Spastic Fantastic: spasticfantastic.de
Spirit of the Streets: oi-punk.com
Static Shock Records: staticshockrecords@gmail.com
Superlame: superlame.theshop.jp
Thrilling Living: thrillingliving.com, thrillingliving@gmail.com
Too Much Rock: toomuchrock.com
Top Drawer: tdrecs.com
Total Punk: floridasdying.com
Trouble in Mind: troubleinmindrecs.com
Trująca Fala: facebook.com/trujacafala
25 Diamonds: 25diamonds.com
Vinyl Conflict: vinylconflict.com
Voodoo Rhythm: Wankdorffeldstrasse 92, 3014 Bern, SWITZERLAND, voodoorhythm.com
Who Killed Bambi: who_killed_bambi@web.de
X-Mist: Postfach 1545, 72195 Nagold, GERMANY, x-mist.de

CONTACTS

DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(BP) Ben Paulsen
(GH) Greg Harvester
(JR) Jason Ryan
(MB) Matt Badenhop
(MA) Michael de Toffoli(

BASIC DICKS – A raw and nauseating attack from BASIC DICKS. I love the name and their tape design: pink case, cool cut-and-paste art with doodles of dicks. The least happy one is waving at me. Imagine if KLEENEX, PINK PILE, OH-OK, and SUBURBAN LAWNS came at you like AKKA and CONFUSE. Dismal, drawn-out chords at time make it even darker than it starts out. This UK five-piece has released a super solid, and threatening demo with a focus on feminism and veganism. "Tempeh Tantrum" is my favorite song title, but "Tiny Comb" is my jam. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, basicdicks.bandcamp.com)

BLACK HOLE YOUTH – *Now That's What I Call Punk* – I feel like it's pretty safe to say that almost every song on this tape delivers different elements or approaches—moments of upbeat, driving punk that then switch to more snotty, melodic songs more on the garage side of things. This is a unique and tough one to pin down. Some aspects of the more minimalist approaches remind me of the URINALS with a sprinkle of Plan-it-X Records. Lyrical content seems to be reflecting on heartache, self-destruction and isolation. Chicago punks doing what they wanna do. (BP) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, blackholeyouth.bandcamp.com)

CASH FOR YOUR STORIES – *Relaxed City Living* – A reverse chronological collection of this defunct Manchester band's three EPs. They do an interesting disjointed and angular post-punk style. The first few songs are neatly written with a rickety performance. The vocals are awkwardly hollered. Sometimes it's charming, other times it's…awkward. The previous EPs sound much more confident and cohesive to my ears. A worthy and deserving band for a discography collection. (MA) (15-song CD-R, lyrics included, Tom Wise, Flat 2, Scott House, 35 Central Avenue, Levenshulme, Manchester M14 ZHF, UNITED KINGDOM)

CIRCADIAN RITUAL – Four beautifully depressing and gloom-ridden doom metal tracks from the cold reaches of crust capital Minneapolis. GRAVES AT SEA, ASUNDER, and THORR'S HAMMER are all brought to mind. Occult, mysterious, and hypnotic, these are mammoth no-fucks-given riffs with mystical and pagan lyrical content. Moon through bare branches cover image? Check. Worthy of occupying any metalhead's tape deck. (JR) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, circadianritual.bandcamp.com)

CONDEMNED – This is rough old school style hardcore, in the vain of DISRUPT, DISGUST, STATE OF FEAR, or CONSUME with grizzlier and similarly venomous vocals. This is just what I'm looking for in a D-beat hardcore punk band. Awesome stipple artwork on the cover: crow, scythe, skull, you know. Highly recommended for any TOTAL WAR, E.N.T., '90s Connecticut / Minneapolis / Seattle hardcore fiends. Great tape! (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, condemnedtohell.bandcamp.com)

DELETER – *Meaningless Chants* – Presented in an un-fileable format (tape-in-a-yellow-envelope, with zine-style art / layout), DELETER dish out some huge sounding, peppy rock. Self-recorded and produced, it sounds super full and tight, features loads of impressive backup vocals, synths, and other layers that really fill the room. It's hard to pin down the style, but I'd say this falls somewhere on the vast spectrum of post-punk to indie rock, though the songs are pretty straightforward. While most everything about this is commendable, no single song particularly stands out. I'm not really drawn to their vibe, but it's still important to give credit where it's due. (MA) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, delete.bandcamp.com)

DUCK & COVER – *Stuck In Decline* – Capable and safe-sounding rockish tunes from Boston. At their best moments I can hear a STIFF LITTLE FINGERS sensibility in the songwriting, but this sounds pretty Warped Tour friendly. (MA) (7-song CD-R, lyrics not included, duckcover1.bandcamp.com)

FLUKE – Heavy and thrashing jams from Singapore. A full and fucking menacing sound goes a long way in a time when so much hardcore blends together. The vocal echo is intentionally timed to create a call and response effect that works well, and isn't just a chaotic wash like many other singers who employ delay. A pretty effective blend of D-beat and crusty hardcore, but not really metallic. Three scorchers. Short and sweet. (MA) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, flukepest@gmail.com, Bik 104 B, #04-27, Edgefield Plains, SINGAPORE 822104)

F-71 – A SoCal punk band with an unmistakable SoCal sound. It's not hard to hear the ADOLESCENTS and TSOL influence, as well as late '70s punk. The singer has a fair amount of charisma but is horribly off-key most of the time, which is hard to ignore. It closes with a pretty limp STIFF LITTLE FINGERS cover. (MA) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, devourecordsla@gmail.com)

GOWL – *On Our Feet Or On Our Knees* – These guys have a pretty apt name because this shit sounds like one big scary growling owl. This is a total ASSÜCK-loving, all low-end blasting, grindcore freak show. It has all the rumble and chaos of a landslide, or a bear attack. It also has some truly demented electronic interludes, which break my mind a little. So, if you want to break your mind, get this! (BA) (15-song cassette, lyrics not included, Tru Freak, 301 Quarry Brook dr. South Windsor, CT, 06074)

GREEN KID – *Maybe Sleep* – This recording graduates from short-story emo into introspective and mature college rock. These songs are twice as long and cover twice as much as the earlier tape (reviewed below), both musically and emotionally. Really reminiscent of DINOSAUR JR. with nice

long therapeutic guitar solos and confidently vulnerable confessionals. It's *very* storied and he really gives each thought the space to breathe. I felt like I really got to experience the journey that he was taking me on. (MD) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, greenkid.bandcamp.com)

GREEN KID – *Silent Like A…* – Confessions-of-a-sensitive-kid second wave emo that has a darker, after-hours kind of punk emotion. He has an exposed confidence similar to BIOLOGY but with more of a driving energy. These are lonely bedroom compositions of anthems for our generation with well-composed confessional lyrics fitting into songs that I honestly wanted to be longer. They're like a short one-page diary entry that says everything that happened but doesn't go into a lot of deep detail. It's emotional and honest, and still has youthful positive outlook. (MD) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, greenkid.bandcamp.com)

THEE GUILLOTINES – These LA fuckers are sitting somewhere on the line between rabid USHC and rock'n'roll swagger, but (thankfully) pay enough attention to the hardcore side of things to keep this shit on point. A seriously lo-fi recording and a generous supply of feedback makes this thing sound completely vicious. Lots of references to weapons in the titles (Napalm, nukes, and blades). Members of CØNDITIØN and FUNDAMENTAL. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, M. Ice, 1852 S Radway Avenue, West Covina, CA 91790)

HORRID – *Black Metal Crasher Crusties* – Here's a cold and evil one from the frozen north of Vancouver, Canada. This bass and drum only band delivers some truly wretched blackened crust. Unlike many in this style, these guys have no time for epic bombast. They're too busy vomiting black pestilence across this unholy world. It's raw and disgusting. Check it out! (BA) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, Tru Freak, 301 Quarry Brook dr. South Windsor, CT, 06074)

JOINT D ≠ – *Intelligence* – This pretentiously titled cassette is snarling cranium-knocking energetic hardcore. The guitar tone borders on indie rock at times while the underlying bass and drums are acidic and vicious. I really like how psychotic and heavy this recording sounds, at time a wall of garage-y noise. Subtle delay on the vocals and punk rock'n'roll all the way through. (JR) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, jointd.bandcamp.com)

THE KILL – *Make 'em Suffer* – This one is all blastbeats, all the time. These grind metal dudes from Down Under seem to have no time for anything but machine gun pummeling. They've got that atonal gore metal lightning speed precision, but without the autopsy lyrics. This stuff is alright, but I get tired of it after a few songs. This one's for true metalheads only. (BA) (15-song cassette, lyrics included, tolivealie.com)

LOWHANGERS – *Ulterior Motives* – Unrelenting, driving noisy hardcore that keeps it steadily in fourth gear. Cavernous screeching vocals with bottomed-out, heavy bass under chunky guitars and pounding drums that work their way through your ear canals and into your psyche. It's dark, bleak, at times psychotic, but actually surprisingly has a kind of groove to it. They'll definitely break your spine and leave your head limp on your shoulders, but you'll still find a way to nod along. (MD) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, lowhangers.bandcamp.com)

MALA VISTA – My first impression from the first song had me thinking this Brooklyn band was ripping off BENT OUTTA SHAPE ripping off the REPLACEMENTS ripping off the CLASH, but I soon realized that maybe they're just really inspired by '77 punk and early power pop. The share the tunefulness of the BEAT and the RUBINOOS, but have more oomph and aggressiveness than either of those bands ever had. All of the songs are instantly catchy with memorable walking bass lines. Excellent tape. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, malavista.bandcamp.com)

MEAT DREAMS – *2017 Tour Tape* – Arrrgghhh, this fucking rules!! These Western Massachusetts fuckers play over-the-top, truly manic, noisy-as-all-fuck, freak out spazzcore. Their geographic location leads me to comparisons like FAT DAY, especially in the way that their vocalist just goddamn looooooses it!! Weird, fucked up and interesting without seeming like they're trying too hard at it. Put me on your mailing list for everything you've ever done, MEAT DREAMS! This is their first two demos on one tape. (GH) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, meatdreams.bandcamp.com)

MISADVENTURE – Okay, I was ready to write this one off as Southern Californian pop punk with strong No Idea and DILLINGER 4 references, because that's how I see it, but it also has enough hooks and strong songwriting to keep it afloat. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, chavj303@gmail.com)

NAIL CLUB – Minimal, lo-fi, bedroom synth from Pensacola, FL. Knob twisters and reverb-laden vocals pushed into the red. Sometimes uncomfortable and intrusive and other times smooth and droning. The cold beats on this keep it driving. NAIL CLUB has a new fan. (GH) (8?-song cassette, lyrics not included, itsonlynoise@hotmail.com, optikmuzak.bigcartel.com)

NASHGUL – *Cárcava* – Here we have an uncompromising grindcore ripper out of Spain. This shit sounds old school, like the first BOLT THROWER record, with a little CARCASS on the side, or like a putrid battlefield at night. They also remind me of that early DYSTOPIA shit, but with the sensibility of a tank driver. It's grim, heavy and fast. What more do you want? (BA) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, tolivealie.com)

ORDINANCE – This one is some down and dirty, raw D-beat from Connecticut. Many bands try to pull this kind of thing off but few do it as well as these guys. They give you exactly what you're looking for, equal parts DISCHARGE and ANTI CIMEX, with a noisy as fuck delivery, and just the right amount of sick guitar leads. If you can't get enough DIS, you've got to get this. (BA) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, vex.rex@hotmail.com)

RUSSIAN TREMORS – *Roaring Quasars* – Weirdo jammy stuff from San Diego. Bits of psych and jazz mixed with punk, ultimately resulting in what I'd call fringe alternative rock. Or how about "post-everything." Vocal styles range from harsh or guttural to terribly sung to screamy. Four men rocking out. (MA) (8-song CD-R, lyrics not included, russiantremorsmusic.bandcamp.com)

SCRAP BRAIN – Sludgy, desperate, pissed hardcore from London. When I say "sludgy" I don't mean in that calculated, doomy way. I mean sludgy in that borderline inept, overcome by distortion way that sounds so fucking good on a demo tape. The lyrics, about living with a personality disorder, getting eyed on the street and more are just so righteously and seriously pissed. No pose. Stomping and maddening, just like DIY hardcore should be. Accept no substitutes. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, scrapbrainhc.bandcamp.com)

SPILL YOUR GUTS – *Full Blast* – Ultra metallic hardcore from expats living in Shanghai. The EP suffers from that annoying "*ya-ya-ya-ya*" hardcore vocal style. The songs are not without hooks from the guitars and some notable rhythmic tricks like blastbeats and breakdowns. Lyrically they rail on religion as well as sing hardcore dude party type stuff. (MA) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, spillyourguts.bandcamo.com)

SPUR – *Holly* – A fucking atrocious pop punk / rock Christmas album that is embarrassing and sounds horrible and is not

DEMOS

a joke and doesn't even have any cuss words. (MA) (8-song CD-R, lyrics not included, spuronline.com)

WARM BODIES – *Eat Snot & Rot* – This is the newest tape from these prolific Kansas City weirdo rockers and it sounds legitimately insane. Broken hardcore? Punk taken apart and reassembled wrong, but so, so right? Their singer Olivia shrieks and wails in a way that sounds truly original and nutso. Along with their new EP, this is probably my favorite release by them so far and if this is a hint of what's to come, please bring it on. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, warmbodies100.bandcamp.com)

WRANGLER BRUTES – *Denver 10/08/04* – Live recording through the mixing board from this supergroup of sorts. BORN AGAINST fans were foaming at the mouth when this band was active. WRANGLER BRUTES left us with a tape, LP, and one single of their wild, chaotic punk. Here we're treated to a posthumous document, complete with obnoxious McPheeters banter and covers of LIFE'S BLOOD and GLASS CANDY. Fourteen short bursts limited to 100 copies. (MA) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, 25diamonds.storenvy.com)

V/A – *Joie de Vivre et Nouilles en Salade #40* – Wow. OK, here we go. Twenty-five songs from all over the US, Europe, and Australia, all found from interviews that are included in the attached zine. He describes this as being just like the mixtapes that his sister would make for him: a huge range of seemingly random songs. The music spans from dark groove sludge, to sexy dance-punk, to sultry psychotic lounge jazz, to roadhouse bar rawk, to baroque county, to gypsy spazz jazz punk, to a solo surf ballad, to a Nintendo 8-bit cover of "Ever Fallen In Love" by the BUZZCOCKS…and that's just the A-side! Flip it over and the mosaic continues with weird psych-y garage, salsa punk, Hindu punk, Gypsy fusion folk punk, minimalist electronica hip-hop, alt-rock, and more crazy ends of unexpected spectrums. By the time you start the B-side you've given up trying to anticipate what's coming next. I loved this tape. It really is the result of someone hunting for new music. If a friend or a sibling were to have given this to me I'd be so happy to have it exclusively live in my tape deck for months. (MD) (25-song cassette, lyrics not included, nouillesensalade.free.fr)

V/A – *Seoul Punk Compilation* – Goddamn! What a cool release! As someone who is a huge fan of DIY efforts to document specific moments of regional punk scenes, I am very excited that this exists. This tape features a handmade insert and contains twenty-six tracks from fourteen very different punk bands from Seoul, South Korea. I believe all the recordings are from the last two years or so. Some of these bands are still playing and some are now defunct. DEAD GAKKAHS plays blistering, chaotic hardcore punk with shrill, fierce vocals reminiscent of the COMES. HUQUEYMSAW plays guttural, galloping, evil-sounding metal punk in the vein of HELLHAMMER. DEAD CHUNKS plays lo-fi hardcore punk with melodic elements that is straight-forward in the best way. GONGURI plays heavy-as-fuck, sludgy, mid-tempo crust punishment with growling vocals. MYMANMIKE plays mid-tempo technical punk tunes that have a swing to them. Moments remind me of GHOSTLIMB. S.A.G.A.I. plays raw, driving, Scandinavian-influenced d-beat with a good dose of guitar squeals and leads in the vein of TOTALITÄR. SCUMRAID plays fucking killer distorted, noisy, frantic and brutal d-beat that is more memorable to me than many other current similar acts. I was fortunate enough to see this band last year at Manic Relapse Fest and was blown away! CHRISTFUCK delivers guttural, metal influenced punk complete with screeching vocals and blast beats. The KITSCHES play upbeat, catchy and pissed punk. JORDAN RIVER delivers lo-fi raging D-beat that will get you shaking your fist. GUK-DO plays fast hardcore punk that sounds influenced by the Italian hardcore classics such as RAW POWER. FIND THE SPOT plays straightforward, catchy punk. YUPPIEKILLER plays furious, jarring hardcore that would fit great with Japanese hardcore contemporaries such as FORWARD. OCTOPOULPE plays instrumental heavy, rockin', MELVINS-influenced jams. Overall, DEAD GAKKAHS, SCUMRAID, S.A.G.A.I., and DEAD CHUNKS were my personal favorites! Check out this tape! (BP) (26-song cassette, lyrics not included, familyvaluesrecords.bandcamp.com)

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Send zines for review to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. Include postpaid price within the US and internationally. We are always looking for multi-lingual zine reviewers who are based in the US. Write to ari@maximumrocknroll.com for more information.

(AB) Arielle Burgdorf
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(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(EW) Eli Wald
(JB) Julia Booz
(KS) Kenn Suto
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Mikey Minicomix

BOYLE HEIGHTS ALLIANCE AGAINST ARTWASHING & DISPLACEMENT: A SHORT HISTORY OF A LONG STRUGGLE #1
$3 / 36 pgs
Quite possibly the first essay / treatise I've read on this subject that actively asks galleries simply to move out in order to save threatened communities from eviction and / or getting priced out. This zine is great at simplifying a complex issue, seeing the pros and cons of the promises that the art world brings to neighborhoods, the lies of providing diverse voices and bringing a higher quality of life to endangered communities on the frontlines of revitalization. Even better, this zine is bilingual in both Spanish and English to reach the most people. Gives a strong class analysis and works to represent several Los Angeles community groups from the Boyle Heights neighborhood that are fighting displacement along with the voices of artists who are also pushing back against the forces of capital. The authors also incorporate a historical analysis, bringing in the different policies and police actions that have been threatening the area over time. I recommend this to better understand the role that galleries and artists play in the process of development in lower-income neighborhoods, and just to bolster the spirit because these folks are not fucking around. (JB)
alianzacontraartwashing@gmail.com / alianzacontraartwashing.org

BURN IT ALL DOWN: AN ANTIFASCIST SPELLBOOK
free / 58 pgs
There's so much clueless clickbait being thrown around the internet lately regarding this crew of cyber witches referencing literal fascists like Aleister Crowley and attributing the end goal of their work to taking down / binding / hexing Donald Trump. Not even going to devote the rolling of both of my eyes to that intellectually lazy and myopic fuckery. For those that missed the fire ass cyber hex PDF floating around lately, the Yerbamala Collective is a crew of online witches who use the internet to create a discourse but most importantly spells and hexes for brujx empowerment and against white supremacy via various PDFs. Echoing *Truisms / Inflammatory Essays* by Jenny Holzer in format but bringing something conjured long before that bitch gained any notoriety in the dusty ass halls of modern and contemporary museums. There's fire in this zine like "LET YR FEAR TURN YOU INTO A FEARSOME CREATURE UNBOUND BY SPACE & TIME DRINKING THE TEARS & BLOOD OF FASCISM'S CHILDREN." Don't sleep on downloading this; a serious read for all brown freek brujx queers who are sick of the wyt fuckery all around us. (AP)
yerbamalacollective.tumblr.com

BUTCHXQUEEN #1
$3 / 24 pgs
Centering validation and representation, this collection of poetry and stories deals with brown and queer identities, the invisibility that comes with both axes, and the power of writing and storytelling. There is a lot packed into these few pages, accenting despair with bursts of resilience. As the writer puts it, "sometimes things get worse before they get even worse." There are stories of sex work, being attracted to straights, and the beauty of being in love even if it's with the absolute wrong person. (JB)
darcycrashdistro.tumblr.com

CELEBRATED SUMMER #1
$5 / 42 pgs
One has to assume that this is a one-off, as this is a celebration / recollection of the last ten years of operating the record store Celebrated Summer in Baltimore. I thought it was going to be a total snoozefest, but it was a pretty cool, endearing read. Kinda short and sweet story on how and why the shop opened and where it's had to move throughout the years. Sounds like a ton of boring horseshit, right? Well, surprisingly, it wasn't. I've thought a little about it in the last half hour, and I've decided that if, say, Grooves, Thrillhouse, Mississippi or any other of my favorite wingnut record stores did this, I'd be pretty stoked and I'd buy the fuck out of that zine. Man, this store has had some cool shirts and marketing ideas, to boot! (DZ)
3616 Falls Road, Baltimore, MD 21211 / celebratedsummerrecords.com

CZECH ONE II #4
$3 / 29 pgs
This zine is a small, artfully minimal personal zine by a person from Maryland. There's a reminiscence of childhood spent running around the forest, a story of going shooting at a gun range, and a written portrait of the grandfather of the writer's wife, a rugged old man living on a farm in Iowa. The tone of the whole zine is soft and tender, and it makes me feel like reading this while laying in a grassy field on a sunny day. The art on the cover and dotted throughout is great, and fits perfectly with the tone and physical layout of the whole issue. This zine is a nice breath of fresh air, but best approached when you're feeling relaxed. I wish more people would send in perzines (hint hint). (KS)
danielseraphimmoss@gmail.com

DONALD SUTHERLAND'S BUTT #2
32 pgs
Film and hairstyling are at the heart of this zine. It's a real nice full-color glossy jobber. Interviews with famous hairstylists as well as local friends who are also hairstylists. Movie reviews are complemented by large colorful drawings and collage. If you wanna learn about the political relevance of a shampoo-free life or rock movie, this zine is for you. (EC)

FLAUSTIN PARADISE #3
28 pgs
There's no shortage of hyper-local punk fanzines complete with interviews and show

ZINES

photos. *Flaustin Paradise* doesn't limit itself to a local scene. This issue features scene reports via band interviews from Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Birmingham and Athens, Alabama; New York City; and Springfield, Illinois. Haram, Wad, and Snake Church are all featured. There's loads of cool pictures of touring and local bands from all around Texas. (EC)
1000 Dorset Drive, Austin, TX 78753 / flaustinparadise@gmail.com

HOW TO LEAVE YOUR OPPRESSIVE-ASS BIG BANK FOR A SLIGHTLY LESS SHITTY SITUATION
$1 / 1 page
The main point of this little one-pager seems to be that if you are too depressed or overwhelmed to do much, remember there are a ton of small things you *can* do. Changing where you do your banking from a huge DAPL / military industrial complex supporting demon to a much smaller, locally-focused credit union or bank is one easy task. It arguably might not be as effective as other things you can do, but taking your money out of their hands is pretty fucking important move, even if it's your only one. I don't know who would need a step-by-step tutorial on how to change their own bank account, but who the hell am I to judge? (DZ)
brannyholmes@gmail.com)

KOOGMO #9
$1 / 19 pgs
This is a rad, albeit super weird, little read. It's one of those "anything goes" zines, which seemingly prints whatever gets thrown its way, regardless of content. Pen-pal requests and poetry from US prisoners, a few really super short stories, a giant picture of a truck odometer (it did make it to the 200k mark, so...), tattoo flash, and a bunch of other stuff without too much of a coherent stream of consciousness—so you know I kinda liked it. Not punk in any way, but hell, I'll read the next one. The editor is pretty open about wanting submissions of practically any type. Nothing mind-blowing, but all cool and weird. (DZ)
PO Box 861294, Plano, TX 75086

LIVING IN THE CITY #6
35 pgs
This fanzine has all the usual parts: column type things, interviews, reviews. Bands covered include Snor and Ond Tro, and there's also a beginner's guide to emo. The overall layout is crisp and there are several photo and art spreads, which makes all the blown-out pictures that did make it into these pages look so blaring. (MM)
livinginthecity.dk

LOS ANGELES QUEER RESISTANCE #2
$3 / 36 pgs
Collection of varied queer writers on the subjects of politics, privilege, poetry, and the like. Also has an interview with the queer artist Hector Silva, who talks about the rise of trans rights, wanting to see a critique of monogamy, class, and nationality in wider queer circles. My favorite is an autobiographical take on gender non-conformity, where the author remembers being a child who played with roles and androgyny, and the sometimes-violent reactions from it. It's a celebration of defying the rules, and the strength of being yourself. Overall this zine has a lot of different voices and content and is full of cool writing. (JB)
laqrzine@hotmail.com / laqrcollective.tumblr.com

NAH ZINE
$3 / 22 pgs
A full-page Spanish and English newsprint rag put out in conjunction with NAH Fair, LA's critical response to the LA Art Book Fair. The opening article is real and brilliant, setting the stage for the struggle in LA and putting it into perspective by outlining its relationship to the hyper-gentrification happening in cities across the US. The same people and corporations gentrifying SF and NYC are up in DTLA and surrounding neighborhoods like Boyle Heights, displacing communities of color through galleries, art organizations and revitalization projects laying ground for a white and / or wealthy suburban creative classes to move into pre-constructed Ikea towers and work at ambiguous VC funded startups in former factory buildings. These are literal millionaires rich off of inherited / stolen wealth, looking to throw their $$ into land speculation, real estate, and art. However, as conveyed in this zine, this resistance isn't new but part of a long narrative of struggle that stretches back to the neighborhood's inception in the late 1890s. The story is all too familiar: POC and impoverished neighborhoods that face chronic financial neglect being slowly torn apart for "civic improvement" that displaces residents only to further commit harm by turning land into a real estate free for all for those with financial power. This zine jam packs so much in twenty-two inky pages. Profiles and statements from groups such as Union de Vecinos, a tenant rights organization out of the Pico Aliso and Aliso Village public housing projects, and Defend Boyle Heights, a group that's been making noise recently for successfully running white art gallery PSSST out of their neighborhood. It includes a map of all the sus galleries and complicit organizations in the area calling the shots on colonizer progress. Also included: an article detailing what people can do to actively resist. Overall, this is an inspiring and validating tome with the urgency and candor needed to resist neo-colonialist gentrification in all its material and aesthetic forms. (AP)
e-mail@nah.world / nah.world

NESTING #2
14 pgs
This is small and short and stops suddenly. It's an intense and brutal telling of thoughts on fucking shitty men interwoven with memories of rape. I'm reading the (hopefully) cathartic writing of a person I don't know. This is well-written, brief, and intimate. (MM)
alexspeaks7@gmail.com

SODA KILLERS #13
$5 / 36 pgs
I've reviewed *Soda Killers* before and was legitimately stoked to see another issue of it in my *MRR* inbox (a piece of property I am more excited about than I admit). This issue runs a broad gamut, including interviews with musical artists (Fucking and Twilight Fauna), reviews of records found at a Half Price Books, the Minnesota hamburger spot inside scoop, and some great reviews of random CDs. Since you read every issue of *MRR*, memorize each page, chant the printed words back to yourself as you lay in bed, and then devour the paper and ink to feel closer to its power, you'll recognize the interview with Fucking from issue number 405. I don't know fucking fuck-all about Fucking except this interview and it's okay—competent, but doesn't do a ton for me. Michael Francis's interview with Twilight Fauna (Paul Ravenwood) was really interesting, especially for someone like me who doesn't know a lot about black metal but is fascinated by it and the mythos of Appalachia. Beyond that, I would read this publication just for Nathan O'Brien's reviews of…well, anything, and the layout of both issues I've looked at has been excellent. This grizzled zine miser is telling you to shell out your pathetic pittance of a paycheck and get this zine! (KS)
thee.n.o.b@gmail.com / hotdogdayz.bigcartel.com

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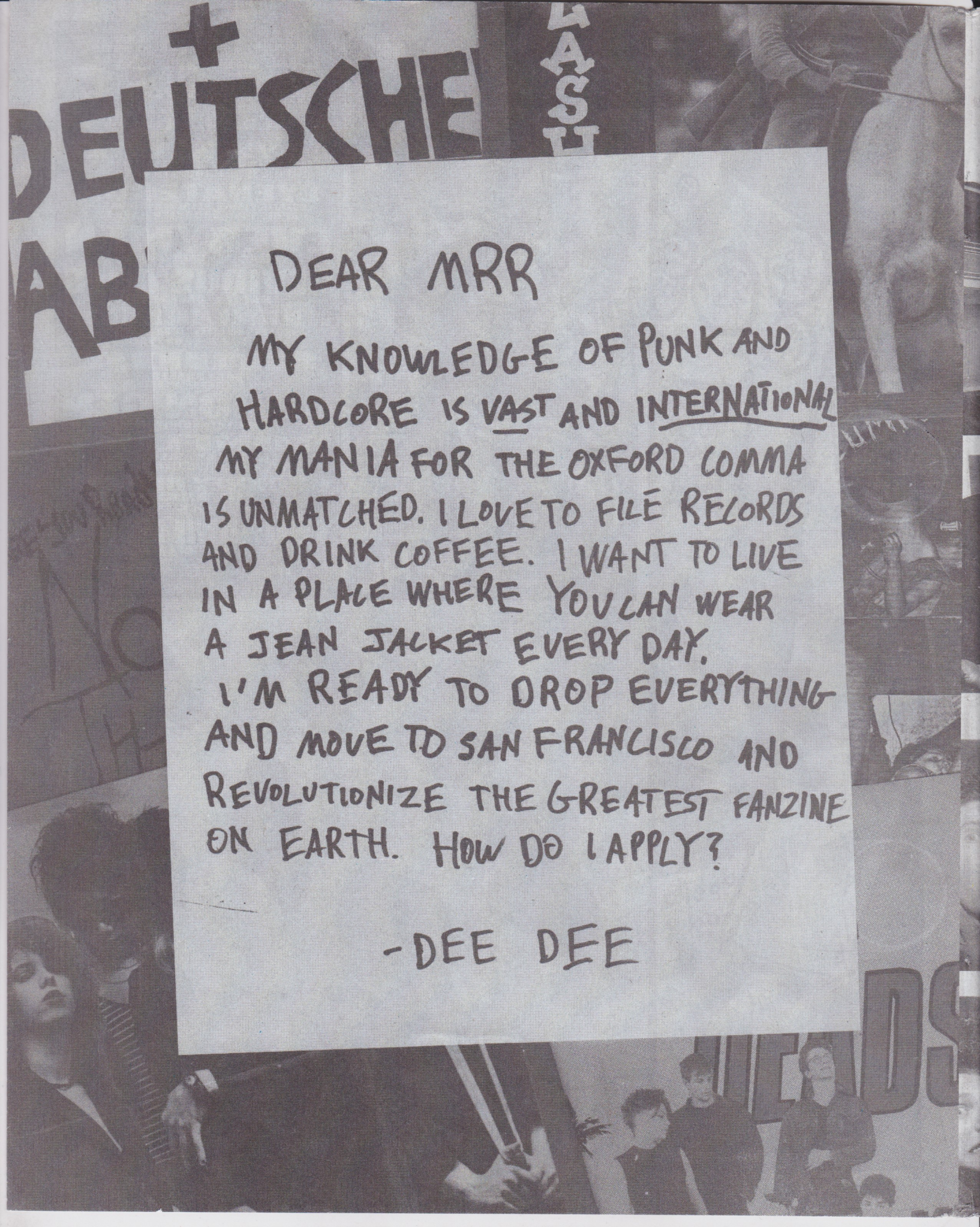

DEAR MRR

MY KNOWLEDGE OF PUNK AND HARDCORE IS VAST AND INTERNATIONAL MY MANIA FOR THE OXFORD COMMA IS UNMATCHED. I LOVE TO FILE RECORDS AND DRINK COFFEE. I WANT TO LIVE IN A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN WEAR A JEAN JACKET EVERY DAY. I'M READY TO DROP EVERYTHING AND MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO AND REVOLUTIONIZE THE GREATEST FANZINE ON EARTH. HOW DO I APPLY?

-DEE DEE